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EIGHT-PAGE CHELTENHAM RACING PULLOUT

INSIDE TODAY

TEAM OF '83/84 HAVE THEIR SAY ON SAINTS

Legends' view on top four bid – starts page 20

SPITFIRES SOAR

FAMOUS VICTORY FOR EASTLEIGH AS THEY BEAT BRISTOL ROVERS 2-1

GOAL: Michael Green scores.
Picture: Paul Collins

EASTLEIGH recorded a famous victory as they beat Vanarama Conference leaders Bristol Rovers 2-1 at the Memorial Stadium today.

The Spitfires ended a five-game winning streak for the Gas and a 20-match unbeaten run which started all the way back in October, *writes PETER HOWARD*.

In an incredible afternoon for the play-off chasers, who would have turned many heads with this outstanding victory, Michael Green gave them an early lead.

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EASTLEIGH

The Big Interview with Ben Strevens
See pages 10-13

CHERRIES

Howe reacts to going top again
See page 9

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Non-league Football

DELIGHT: Celebrations after the first goal.

PUNCH: Goalmouth action.

BRISTOL ROVERS 1 EASTLEIGH 2: FAMOUS

EASTLEIGH HEADS WITH

FROM FRONT PAGE

Jack Midson struck just past the hour to double it as Eastleigh sealed a memorable win in front of a 7,371 crowd – the biggest to ever watch the Spitfires play.

Rovers, who had the best home-record in the Conference at the start of the day, were consigned to just their second defeat at the Memorial all campaign, just a day after manager Darrell Clarke picked up the league's Manager of the Month Award.

Gas top-scorer Matty Taylor set-up a tense finale on 78 minutes to make it 2-1 but the away team saw it out to further confirm their place among the play-off hunters and damage Bristol's title charge.

Eastleigh made one change from their emphatic 4-0 win over Macclesfield Town last weekend, with Midson reinstated to the starting line-up in place of benched Craig McAllister.

Meanwhile, Rovers installed goal-hero from the 1-0 win at Gateshead, Ellis Harrison, into the opening XI for Nathan Blissett, who was a substitute.

Adam Dawson – who played against the Spitfires for Nuneaton in a 2-1 defeat earlier in the season – also came in for injured star midfielder, and former Salisbury City man, Stuart Sinclair.

Ollie Clarke, who scored an absolute belter and was sent-off when the two sides drew 1-1 at the Silverlake Stadium back in September, returned after injury, but started on the bench alongside ex-Saint Neal Trotman.

The Spitfires made an excellent start and within the opening 20 second had already caused havoc as Midson rushed into the box and won a corner.

That was one of three corners Eastleigh had in the opening ten minutes and, from one of them, Craig Stanley drove powerfully from the edge of the box for the first shot of the game, which was blocked.

More importantly, however, they managed to take the lead.

On six minutes Jai Reason was fouled just outside the box on the right side by Tom Parkes.

Green stepped up to take it. It looked a very average free-kick, in fact, it should have been routine for keeper Steve Mildenhall to collect-in at his feet.

Instead, though, the Gas custodian was left completely embarrassed as the ball wriggled between his legs and into the net.

The away side continued their energetic start, with Midson, James Constable and Reason impressing.

Reason made Mildenhall work for it as he tried to lob him with a glanced header, but the stopper wasn't to be fooled this time, and tipped away.

The number 10 then fired just over from the near-post in a glut of first-half chances for Eastleigh, as they began this game just as impressively as they finished the Macclesfield game.

Constable and Midson were involved in some great link play and were causing the Gas constant trouble at the back.

The centre midfield trio of Stanley, Ben Strevens and Harry Pell were also excellent.

The ex-Rovers and AFC Wimbledon man, Pell, hassled and harried all the time for the ball and was fantastic all game.

On one occasion the towering middleman sprinted from the edge of the Bristol area to chase down Harrison to win the ball back.

Boos and whistles echoed around the Memorial Stadium on the half hour as Rovers' supporters became increasingly frustrated by their table-topping side's lack of imagination going forward.

Soon after that they did start to create openings.

Spitfires stopper Ross Flitney had to be alert to block as full-back Daniel Leadbitter burst into the box on 31 minutes, before squaring to top-scorer Matty Taylor, who could only hit into the keeper's body.

Then Harrison, the Welsh under-21 international,

FUMBLE: The ball

HAPPY MAN: Eastleigh boss Richard Hill celebrates the win with fans

MORE NEWS AND REACTION IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Non-league Football

AWAY WIN FOR THE SPITFIRES

TURNING VICTORY

squeezes past the goalkeeper for Green's goal. Pictures: Paul Collins

slammed into the side netting minutes later, which brought false celebrations from some quarters of the stadium, who'd thought it had gone in.

It wasn't long before Eastleigh returned to restricting the Gas getting forward.

Richard Hill's side ended the first-half on top as Constable zipped a header goalwards for Mildenhall to spectacularly tip over from a Reason free-kick.

Green hit a free-kick well over to end a superb half for the visitors.

The only worry for Eastleigh was that Midson and Dan Spence had picked up bookings.

Eastleigh, who worked tirelessly in the first 45 minutes, would surely fatigue after the interval.

But they started the second period well, as Constable linked with Midson to eventually fire at goal from inside the box.

Rovers were improving, especially after committing an extra man to attack with Blissett coming on for Leadbitter, though Eastleigh remained tough to break down.

And they had their second as they attacked on the break on 63 minutes. Former Rovers man Stanley zipped the ball across the pitch before it was worked down to right-back Spence deep on his flank.

Spence's cross was delivered into the six yard box where Midson was waiting to pounce.

The industrious forward controlled, almost looked up to check if he was offside, before slotting under Mildenhall.

It could have been three moments later but Strevens fired over.

The home support were baffled by Eastleigh's dominance that continued as Craig McAllister and Deon Burton were introduced to replace strike duo Midson and Constable.

McAllister was straight in the action and was almost on the scoresheet when he tapped in from close range, only for Parkes to clear off the line.

Goal-line technology may have adjudged it to be a goal but the assistant referee waved away appeals.

Taylor then set-up a tense final 12 minutes as the forward slammed into the bottom left of the goal from just outside the box. And that man Taylor could have levelled but he squandered a chance in the box.

The 233 travelling fans were then in fine voice as they helped their side see out the game.

Att: 7,371

Eastleigh: Flitney, Spence, Green, Beckwith, Stanley, Constable (Burton 66), Reason, Midson (McAllister 66), Strevens, Partington, Pell. Subs not used: Todd , Howard, Walker.

ON TARGET: Merthyr Town's former Saint Kayne McLaggon scores the third goal past Totton's new loanee keeper Patrick O'Flaherty

Sorry Stags are outclassed by mighty league leaders

AFC TOTTON'S torrid run of games against the Southern One South & West's top four came to a painful end at the Testwood Stadium this afternoon.

The Stags were out-classed 5-1 by mighty league leaders Merthyr Town as they slumped to their fifth straight defeat and stretched their winless run to seven league games, ***writes WENDY GEE***.

The Stags suffered a pre-match blow when Mike Gosney pulled out suffering food poisoning.

Nathaniel Sherborne (pictured) returned to the starting line-up deployed wide left, while Joe Maxwell again started up front with top scorer Craig Feeney named on the bench.

Totton began brightly, forcing a corner in the opening few seconds via Liam Hibberd's deflected blast.

Table-topping Merthyr looked nothing special in the opening stages – their first glimpse of quality coming when Ian Traylor breezed past Ellis White on the right.

He laid the ball off to ex-Saint Kayne McLaggon, who got his shot all wrong and fired well wide.

The Stags conjured up a couple of half chances with Maxwell's header from Stuart Mott's cross going straight to keeper Tom Bradley and then Jack Hoey giving Bradley a tad more work to do with crisp strike from the left.

But, from a position of relative comfort, the Stags fell behind to a goal out of nothing 15-minutes in.

Traylor let fly with an angled shot from the left and any hope young AFC Bournemouth keeper Pat O'Flaherty had of reaching it disappeared when it flicked off Ryan PROSSER'S head into the far corner.

How much Prosser knew about it was debatable, but it signalled a major turning point in the game as the Martyrs suddenly hit their stride.

With McLaggon causing all sorts of problems, Prosser should have made it two when the former Southampton man found him free in front of goal, but Totton managed to scramble the ball behind.

Merthyr pulled the Stags defence in all directions and Prosser again found himself in on goal in the 26th minute, this time teed-up by Traylor. But 17-year-old O'Flaherty denied him with a terrific block with his legs.

The Stags then forced a succession of set-pieces to earn themselves a breather, but there was always that ominous feeling that Merthyr would come again.

And so it transpired in the 34th minute when a long ball forward flicked off Gilbert's head into the path of PROSSER who manoeuvred himself into position on the edge of the box, shrugging off two Totton defenders as he did so, before drilling the ball low into O'Flaherty's bottom right-hand corner for 2-0.

The ease with which Merthyr opened Totton up was awesome at times and, with 41-minutes gone, the Welshmen made it three.

A long ball out of defence reached Traylor on the right and he played the ball across for MCLAGGON to slip it effortlessly past O'Flaherty to leave Totton with a second-half mountain to climb.

Totton made a half-time substitution with Jamie Blackburn replacing defender Rob Flooks and, within ten minutes Feeney was brought on for Maxwell.

In between, it was the visitors who forged the first big chance of the half, but young O'Flaherty stood up well to McLaggon's threat and saved with his feet.

Totton boss Steve Riley then made his third and final roll of the dice, replacing Taylor Edwards with Zac Mouland just after the hour.

And with Merthyr seemingly taking their foot off the gas, a more even contest unfolded.

The Stags kept fighting and were rewarded with a goal on 69 minutes when Sherborne was taken out by sub Dan Summerfield on the left. Gilbert pumped the free-kick into the box and WHITE'S header found the net beyond the reach of Bradley.

But any glimmer of Totton hope was snuffed out on 78 minutes when TRAYLOR collected a ball down the left, brushed past the nearest defender and beat O'Flaherty one on one with an arrowed shot into the far corner.

It got worse for Riley's men with three minutes of normal time remaining. Ryan Green's deep free-kick from inside Merthyr's own half should have been dealt with, but it bounced over a couple of Totton heads and reached sub Corey JENKINS who coolly hooked the ball over O'Flaherty for 5-1.

PREMIER LEAGUE AND FA CUP NEWS – SEE PAGE 4

Henry's on right track

PLAYING Liverpool in the FA Cup quarter-finals holds no fears for Doneil Henry – providing he does not have to take the train to Anfield.

The Canadian's whirlwind beginning to life at Blackburn looks set to continue with a starting spot on Sunday.

Injury problems in defence prompted Rovers boss Gary Bowyer to take Henry on a month's loan from West Ham on Wednesday, the same day they played Sheffield Wednesday in the Championship.

Three hours after meeting his team-mates for the first time, Henry walked out onto the pitch at Hillsborough and was instrumental in the victory that just about keeps Blackburn's play-off hopes alive.

Henry said: "I got a call from the manager in the morning and I was told I was going on loan and I was hopefully playing that night.

"I had to collect my stuff from Upton Park, sign some paperwork and then be on a train. I got on the wrong train, asked the ticket man if it was going to Sheffield to find out I had to get off and get on another train.

"After that finally I recognised some people in Blackburn kit at the train station and from there I was in safe hands. I met the team, did pre-game stuff and then just played.

"I was just really happy to play. It's been a while. I knew me thinking too much wouldn't be good, I just wanted to get on the pitch as soon as possible and establish myself in the team."

Henry began his career at hometown club Toronto and joined West Ham in January after being recommended to Hammers boss Sam Allardyce by former Toronto manager Ryan Nelsen.

Nelsen played for Allardyce at Blackburn, where he was captain and a hugely popular figure.

"It was funny coming to Blackburn and walking through the facility and then seeing him amongst the boards," said Henry.

"Ryan has been a mentor since he came to Toronto. He really has a lot of faith in me and has really guided me along my journey. I knew he was a big figure here and he was a solid defender everywhere he went.

"Junior Hoilett also played here, who's a close friend of mine, so I knew it would be a good move for me."

The 21-year-old has never been to Anfield before but did face Liverpool on their pre-season tour to North America in 2012.

He knows securing the win needed to get to Wembley will be a huge task but has been impressed by the togetherness of the squad.

Henry said: "I'm still getting familiar with a lot of the guys but on the pitch it was great because there was constant chatter and communication and I just thought they believed in me from the get-go.

"When we get the test on Sunday, I think we'll definitely be ready. There's a lot of quality players in here so I think if we can go there and do our job, as long as we stay together as a team, it's definitely possible to get a result.

"I'm not going to shy away from the opportunity. These are the games where you can really see how far you are from the top level."

● Rodgers' Reds will respect Rovers – see page 10

Premiership Spotlight

KANE'S GOALS TAKE SPURS PAST SAINTS

GOAL: Harry Kane scores his first in the 2-1 win over Queen's Park Rangers this afternoon.

THE TOP SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	27	19	6	2	57	22	63
Man City	28	17	7	4	59	27	58
Arsenal	28	16	6	6	53	30	54
Man Utd	28	15	8	5	47	26	53
Liverpool	28	15	6	7	42	30	51
Tottenham	28	15	5	8	46	39	50
SAINTS	**28**	**15**	**4**	**9**	**39**	**20**	**49**

QPR 1 TOTTENHAM 2

TOTTENHAM Hotspur edged ahead of Saints in the race for the European places after victory in this London derby today.

Hosts QPR's hopes of beating the drop received a major blow as Harry Kane underlined his England credentials with a match-winning brace for Tottenham.

The attention of those at both ends of the Premier League were focused on Loftus Road, where the teams involved knew defeat could prove a defining moment in their season.

In the end, Kane proved the difference in a tense, entertaining battle, scoring either side of half-time to take his tally to 26 goals in all competitions in front of Roy Hodgson, securing Spurs a 2-1 win which moved them within three points of the top four.

Sandro's late strike meant his former side had to ride out a late storm, but QPR were unable to avoid falling to a seventh defeat in eight league games.

Things could have been so different had Charlie Austin found the net with some decent first-half chances and his team-mates defended better for Kane's opening goal.

Rio Ferdinand, Nedum Onuoha and Robert Green were all culpable as the 21-year-old was allowed to nod home a free-kick unmarked, while the defence was again found wanting as Kane was all too easily allowed to run through to net.

QPR did have several penalty claims of varying strengths before and after Kane's second and a fine strike from Sandro led to a tense ending, yet Chris Ramsey's men were unable to avoid a defeat that leaves them three points from safety

Goalless cup clash goes to replay

BRADFORD 0 READING 0

BRADFORD and Reading must wait to make history after the two lowest sides left in this season's FA Cup clattered out a goalless lunchtime draw at Valley Parade.

League One side Bradford had the best of a fractious affair but Phil Parkinson's men could not quite summon the spirit which had swept them past Chelsea and Sunderland in the two previous rounds.

And despite the Bantams dominating for long periods, Championship outfit Reading almost snatched it at the death when Oliver Norwood's free-kick eluded everyone in the box and struck the base of Ben Williams' right-hand upright.

Reading striker Pavel Pogrebnyak and Bradford's Gary Liddle also hit the woodwork in the first period in a game big on intent but clearly suffering from the pressure of the prize at stake.

A winner would have sent Bradford into the semi-finals for the first time since they won the trophy in 1911, while the Royals were bidding to end their own 88-year wait.

The bustling tempo was set in the opening minute as Bradford midfielder Billy Knott barged over Jamie Mackie and a Nathaniel Chalobah challenge left James Hanson stretched out on the turf.

If such a game was always bound to be short on quality the early tempo was breathtaking with both sides clearly keen to make a mark in front of two sets of raucous supporters in the lunchtime sunshine.

Bradford had the first shot on target in the 12th minute but it was a simple save for Adam Federici after Hanson only half-connected with a deep cross from the left by James Meredith.

Perhaps mindful of their status as favourites in many people's eyes given their heroics of previous rounds, it was the hosts who seemed to be feeling the pressure most as Steve Clarke's men began to take a grip on proceedings.

Pogrebnyak missed a great chance to snatch the lead for the visitors in the 27th minute when he was put through by Mackie only to fire his shot against the post.

But the home side came equally close nine minutes later when a half-clearance fell to Liddle whose cross from wide on the left eluded everybody in the box and struck the base of Federici's right-hand post.

Keen to keep up his record of scoring in every round of this season's competition, Jon Stead was close to connecting with another Meredith cross as the first half nudged to a gruelling conclusion.

Bradford looked a better team from the start of the second period, pinning the visitors back and coming close within seconds of the restart when Filipe Morais got behind the Reading defence to reach a Hanlon cross only to scuff his effort from a tight angle.

Clarke skewed an effort wide after a neat one-two with Stead on the edge of the box, then Stead himself wriggled through a group of Reading defenders before Stephen Kelly denied him a shooting opportunity with a fine sliding tackle.

Reading were barely in the game as it ticked past the hour mark and they were lucky to stay on level terms in the 71st minute when Hanson fired just wide from point-blank range.

Bradford came close again four minutes later when the excellent Morais flung in another cross and found the head of defender Andrew Davies, who powered his shot just over Federici's bar.

Then came Norwood's late free-kick which sprang through a crowded box and sparked a mighty goalmouth scramble as the visitors missed their chance to snatch a place in the last four by a lick of paint.

ALL TODAY'S RESULTS – SEE PAGE 46

Paine's World

The Saints legend's EXCLUSIVE column on all things football

IS JOSE THE NEW FERGIE?

JOSE MOURINHO

With Chelsea picking up their first piece of silverware this season in last week's Capital One Cup, Jose Mourinho is now well and truly back in business within English football.

The win goes down as his first major trophy since re-establishing himself back at Stamford Bridge, and, as the Blues continue to thrive in both the league and Europe, this really could be just the beginning for the enigmatic Portuguese boss.

Chelsea fans throughout England – and perhaps the world, considering the extent of the club's global reach – will, therefore, have every reason to rejoice, as they sit back and reflect on how the 2014/15 campaign has played out so far.

Their team are playing some really exciting stuff in the Premier League, and, although the Champions League remains a tough target, it is a realistic one.

With Mourinho solidly back at the helm, at least for the foreseeable future, Blues supporters have their best man in place to oversee their team.

Yes, the season remains far from over, and achieving even more silverware will certainly take a great deal more effort and application, but with Chelsea still looking as formidable as they have done for most of the season, is Mourinho fast on his way to becoming the new 'Sir Alex' of the Premier League and English football?

The signs so far seem to suggest that he is.

Alex Ferguson was responsible for not only creating a successful team that did their talking with trophies time and time again, but he also created a legacy that saw Manchester United carry out their activity completely in his image.

Roy Keane acted as his manager's mouthpiece on the pitch as captain, the team employed a determined, never-say-die attitude that saw the players seemingly never give up on the three points, and, as the Scot ruled with an iron fist in a total dictatorial sense, no player who didn't see eye-to-eye with him was given much of a future at Old Trafford.

While Mourinho isn't quite as authoritarian in his approach, the team he has built up since returning to Stamford Bridge certainly seems worthy of testing the great Manchester United sides of old.

The difference is, however, that Ferguson sourced a great deal of his talent from Manchester United's own youth set up.

Mourinho simply isn't as gifted at developing raw gems and turning them into world-renowned stars, but, as today's current footballing climate seems to benefit those with cash over those with the real know-how, such discrepancies hardly seem to make a difference in the minds of many.

Chelsea, therefore, although continuing to operate with nothing truly confirmed, have so far been the strongest English side this season by quite a distance.

The likes of Manchester City and Arsenal have too often shot themselves in the foot to be considered real title contenders for the Blues, and with the likes of Cesc Fabregas, Eden Hazard, and, of course, Diego Costa simply proving too much for most teams to handle this term, Chelsea's impressive style looks set to continue.

Whether or not such form can be maintained in the Champions League remains a debatable issue, however.

To create a legacy in similar fashion to that of Sir Alex, Mourinho must prove a dominant force in Europe as well as the Premier League.

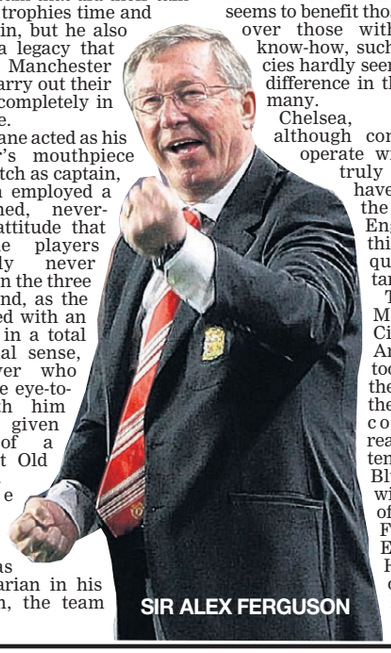
A tricky second leg against Laurent Blanc's expensively-assembled PSG could prove to be the unwanted spanner in the works for Chelsea this season, but, if such a task can be successfully dealt with, the Blues will have every confidence that their side can go on to achieve the ultimate prize in club football by the end of the season.

Much of the proposed Mourinho legacy therefore rests on the fate of his team by the end of this campaign.

If they can continue in their rich vein of form for the remainder of the season, then the future really is limitless for everyone involved with the club, as long as the Russian money continues to flow, that is.

In place of Manchester United, currently under a testing, yet pricey, transitional phase with Louis van Gaal, Chelsea have every chance of making history in 2014/15.

With the necessary foundations in place to start their course of European domination, this really could be a new golden era for the Londoners – marking the start of a Mourinho legacy that could certainly one day rival that of Sir Alex.



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

ADAM RANT – SEE PAGE 7

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Saints Spotlight

SAINTS' FIRST TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2014/15

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
AUGUST															
Sat 17 Liverpool .....A	**L 1-2**	Forster	**Clyne 1**	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Schneiderlin	Wanyama	Tadic*	S Davis**	W-Prowse	Pelle	Long*	Isgrove**	
Sat 23 West Brom .....H	**D 0-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Schneiderlin	Wanyama	Tadic	S Davis*	W-Prowse**	Pelle	Long*	Cork**	
Tues 26 Millwall (LC 2) .....A	**W 2-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Targett	S Davis	Wanyama**	Isgrove*	Long***	W-Prowse	**Pelle 1**	Tadic*	**Cork 1****	Ramirez***
Sat 30 West Ham .....A	**W 3-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	**Schneiderlin 2**	S Davis	Tadic	W-Prowse**	Long*	**Pelle 1**	Ramirez*	Cork**	
SEPTEMBER															
Sat 13 Newcastle .....H	**W 4-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	**Cork 1*****	**Schneiderlin 1**	S Davis	Tadic**	Long*	**Pelle 2**	Wanyama*	W-Prowse**	Gardos***
Sat 20 Swansea .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida*	Bertrand	Cork**	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse***	Tadic	Long	Pelle	Gardos*	S Davis**	**Wanyama 1*****
Tues 23 Arsenal (LC3) .....A	**W 2-1**	Forster	**Clyne 1**	Fonte	Gardos	Targett**	Wanyama	Schneiderin	S Davis	**Tadic 1**	Mane*	Pelle	Long*	Bertrand**	
Sat 27 QPR .....H	**W 2-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	**Bertrand 1**	Wanyama**	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Tadic***	Mane*	**Pelle 1**	Long*	Cork**	Targett***
OCTOBER															
Sun 5 Tottenham .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama*	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Tadic	Mane	Pelle	Long*		
Sat 18 Sunderland .....H	**W 8-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	**Cork 1**	Schneiderlin	S Davis*	**Tadic 1**	Long**	**Pelle 2****	**Wanyama 1***	Mane**	Mayuka***
Sat 25 Stoke .....H	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Cork*	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Tadic	**Mane 1**	Pelle	Wanyama*	Gardos**	
Weds 29 Stoke (LC4) .....A	**W 3-2**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos**	Targett	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis*	Tadic	**Long 1**	**Pelle 2**	Cork*	Alderweireld**	
NOVEMBER															
Sat 1 Hull .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	**Wanyama 1**	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Tadic**	Long*	Pelle	Mane*	Cork**	
Sat 8 Leicester .....H	**W 2-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin***	S Davis*	Tadic	Mane**	Pelle	Cork*	**Long** 2**	Reed***
Mon 24 Aston Villa .....A	**D 1-1**	Forster	**Clyne 1**	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Long**	Tadic	Mane*	Pelle	Mayuka*	Cork**	
Sun 30 Man City .....H	**L 0-3**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin*	S Davis***	Tadic	Mane**	Pelle	Yoshida*	Long**	Mayuka***
DECEMBER															
Weds 3 Arsenal .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	Cork*	S Davis	Tadic**	Long***	Pelle	Yoshida*	Mane**	Mayuka***
Mon 8 Man United .....H	**L 1-2**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Wanyama	S Davis	Long**	Tadic*	Mane	**Pelle 1**	Hesketh*	Mayuka**	
Sat 13 Burnley .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	Bertrand	Wanyama	S Davis	Hesketh*	Tadic	Mane**	Pelle	W-Prowse*	Long**	
Tues 16 Sheff Utd (LC5) .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos	Targett*	Wanyama***	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Bertrand	Mane**	Long	Isgrove*	Mayuka**	Alderweireld***
Sat 20 Everton .....H	**W 3-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld	**Yoshida 1**	Bertrand	Reed	W-Prowse*	S Davis	Long**	**Pelle 1**	Targett*	Gape**	
Fri 26 Crystal Palace .....A	**W 3-1**	Forster	Clyne***	Gardos	**Alderweireld 1**	Yoshida	**Bertrand 1**	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	S Davis*	**Mane 1**	Pelle**	Wanyama*	Long**	McCarthy***
Sat 28 Chelsea .....H	**D 1-1**	Forster	Yoshida**	Fonte	Alderweireld	Targett	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Tadic*	**Mane 1**	Pelle	W-Prowse*	Gardos**	Long***
JANUARY															
Thurs 1 Arsenal .....H	**W 2-0**	Forster	Alderweireld	Fonte	Gardos**	Bertrand	Wanyama	S Davis	W-Prowse	**Tadic*** 1**	**Mane* 1**	Pelle	Reed*	Yoshida**	Long***
Sun 4 Ipswich (FAC 3) .....H	**D 1-1**	Forster	W-Prowse	Fonte	Gardos	Bertrand	Wanyama	**Schneiderlin 1**	Long	S Davis	Tadic*	Pelle	Isgrove*		
Sun 11 Man United .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Alderweireld*	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	S Davis***	Elia**	Pelle	Gardos*	**Tadic** 1**	Reed***
Weds 14 Ipswich (FAC 3) .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Garods	Bertrand	Targett	Wanyama*	Reed	W-Prowse	Tadic**	**Long 1**	S Davis*	Pelle**	
Sat 17 Newcastle .....A	**W 2-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos	Bertrand	Reed	S Davis	Tadic**	W-Prowse*	**Elia*** 2**	Pelle	Cork*	Long**	Targett***
Sat 24 Crystal Palace (FAC 4) .H	**L 2-3**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos*	Bertrand	Cork**	S Davis	Tadic	W-Prowse	Elia	**Pelle 1**	Targett*	Long** ***	Seager***
FEBRUARY															
Sun 1 Swansea .....H	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Reed*	S Davis	Tadic	W-Prowse	Elia**	Pelle	Mane*	Seager**	
Sat 7 QPR .....A	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida*	Targett	Wanyama**	S Davis	**Mane 1**	W-Prowse	Elia***	Pelle	Gardos*	Schneiderlin**	Tadic***
Weds 11 West Ham .....H	**D 0-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Gardos	Yoshida	Wanyama	Reed**	Mane***	S Davis	Elia*	Pelle	Tadic*	W-Prowse**	Djuricic***
Sun 22 Liverpool .....H	**L 0-2**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Targett	Wanyama	S Davis*	W-Prowse**	Djuricic***	Elia	Pelle	Schneiderlin*	Mane**	Tadic***
Sat 28 West Brom .....A	**L 0-1**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Gardos*	Bertrand	Wanyama**	Schneiderlin	Tadic***	Mane	Pelle	Elia*	S Davis**	Long***
MARCH															
Tue 3 Crystal Palace .....H	**W 1-0**	Forster	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Bertrand	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	**Mane 1**	Djuricic***	Elia*	Pelle**	Tadic*	Long**	W-Prowse***
Sun 15 Chelsea .....A															
Sat 21 Burnley .....H															
APRIL															
Sat 4 Everton .....A															
Sat 11 Hull .....H															
Sat 18 Stoke .....A															
Sat 25 Tottenham .....H															
MAY															
Sat 2 Sunderland .....A															
Sat 9 Leicester .....A															
Sat 16 Aston Villa .....H															
Sun 24 Man City .....A															

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
ARTUR BORUC	0	0	0	0	50	0
CODY CROPPER	0	0	0	0	0	0
KELVIN DAVIS	0	0	0	0	292(1)	0
FRASER FORSTER	28	0	7	0	35	0
PAULO GAZZANIGA	0	0	0	0	18(1)	0
RYAN BERTRAND	24	2	4(1)	0	29(1)	2
MATT TARGETT	3(3)	0	5(1)	0	8(4)	0
JOSE FONTE	27	0	7	0	211(5)	13
FLORIN GARDOS	5(6)	0	6	0	11(6)	0
TOBY ALDERWEIRELD	16	1	0(2)	0	16(2)	1
MAYA YOSHIDA	14(3)	1	1	0	61(4)	3
JACK STEPHENS	0	0	0	0	0(1)	0

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
NATHANIEL CLYNE	26	2	6	1	90(5)	5
JACK CORK	5(7)	2	1(3)	1	128(25)	3
HARRISON REED	4(3)	0	1	0	6(10)	0
MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN	18(2)	3	4	1	222(33)	14
VICTOR WANYAMA	19(5)	3	6	0	45(9)	3
STEVEN DAVIS	25(2)	0	5(1)	0	87(20)	6
LLOYD ISGROVE	0(1)	0	1(2)	0	2(4)	0
SAM MCQUEEN	0	0	0	0	0(1)	0
GASTON RAMIREZ	0(1)	0	0(1)	0	27(23)	8
DUSAN TADIC	21(5)	3	5(1)	1	26(6)	4
SADIO MANE	15(5)	6	2	0	17(5)	6
JAMES WARD-PROWSE	12(5)	0	5	0	47(35)	1

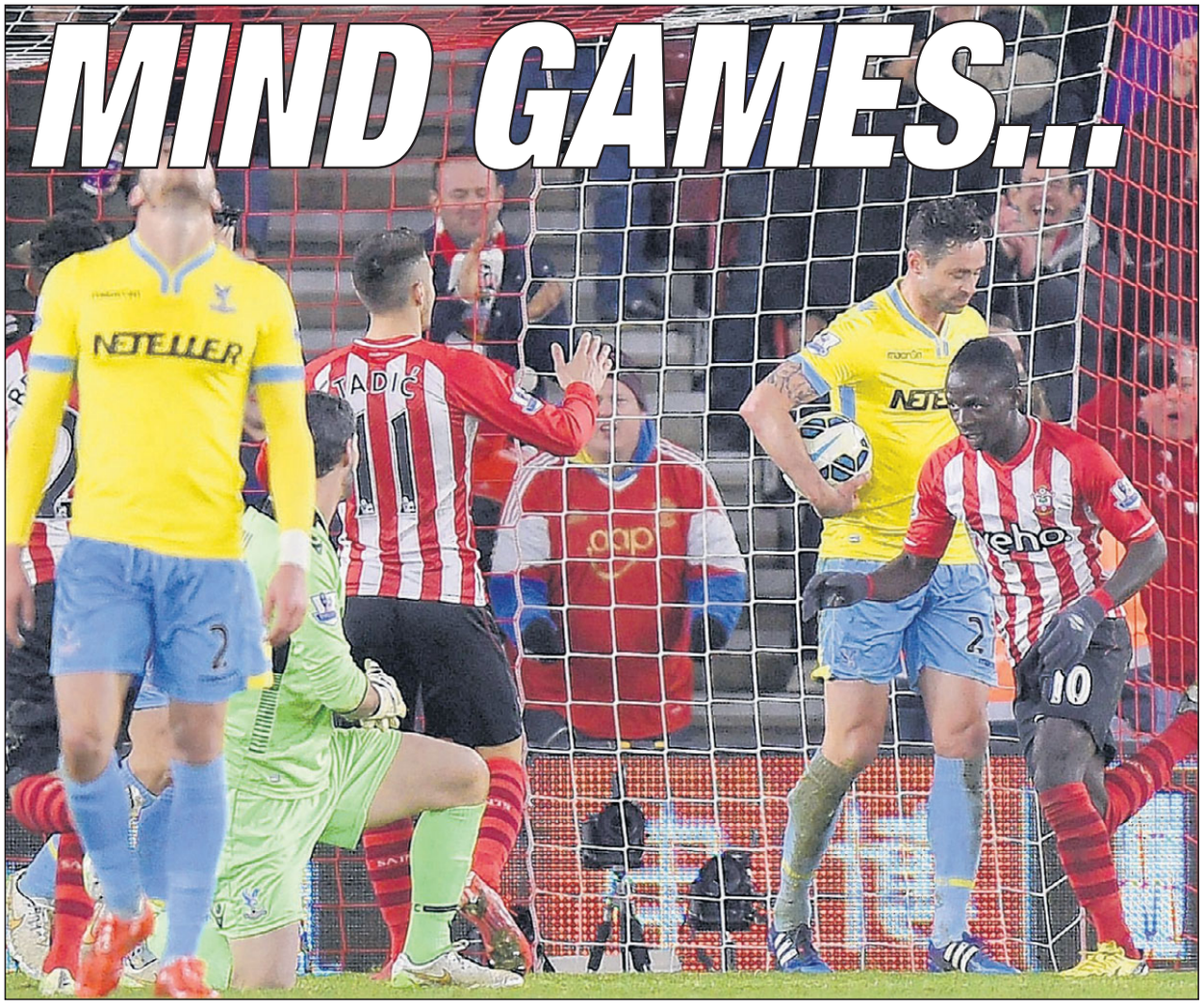
	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
SAM GALLAGHER	0	0	0	0	3(17)	2
SHANE LONG	9(13)	2	5(2)	1	14(15)	3
EMMANUEL MAYUKA	0(5)	0	0(1)	0	3(16)	1
GRAZIANO PELLE	28	8	5(1)	4	33(1)	12
JAY RODRIGUEZ	0	0	0	0	59(17)	26
JAKE HESKETH	1(1)	0	0	0	1(1)	0
DOMINIC GAPE	0(1)	0	0	0	0(1)	0
JASON MCCARTHY	0(1)	0	0	0	0(1)	0
ELJERO ELIA	7(1)	2	1	0	8(1)	2
RYAN SEAGER	0(1)	0	0(1)	0	0(2)	0
FILIP DJURICIC	1(1)	0	0	0	1(1)	0

KEY: LA: league appearances. LG: league goals. CA: cup appearances. CG: cup goals. CSA: career Saints appearances. CSG: career Saints goals.

Adam Rant

This week's big talking points with **Adam Leitch**

MIND GAMES...



RELIEF: Saints celebrate as Sadio Mane scores against Crystal Palace

YOU could sense the relief around St Mary's on Tuesday night.

It was as if the weight of the world had been lifted from the shoulders of Ronald Koeman as he faced the press following his side's 1-0 win over Crystal Palace.

This remarkable season's rollercoaster ride continues to thrill and amaze.

Saints have gone from the side that can't stop winning to a team that can't buy a win to a team that can't stop winning to a team that can't buy a win. It has been amazing.

Though every season has its ups and down, few have been as dramatic and defined in their reversal of fortunes as Saints' has this time out.

It has shown to any who doubt it just how mentally challenging sport is.

What is incredible with Saints is that their form has not always had a direct correlation with injuries or suspensions either.

When they defeated Manchester United and Newcastle in away matches it seemed they were on an unstoppable march to a Champions League position.

They secured those victories despite injuries to key players and, with an easier fixture list and players returning, it seemed certain nothing would stop them.

Oddly they have struggled as their squad has got close to full strength again.

It proves that the winning habit, or the opposite, is not always purely down to ability.

So much of it is in the mind as well.

Anybody who has played sport will understand.

When you are on a roll you feel bulletproof when you take to the pitch.

BACK OF THE NET: Mane's goal on Tuesday night

You almost don't worry what happens or what is thrown in your way because you simply believe you will overcome it and, therefore, the majority of times you do.

When you have the opposite feeling it almost doesn't matter how well things start to go for you, it still feels as if something will go wrong.

Both of those feelings are so crazy when isolated after the event, but when you are out there in the heat of battle, tired and stressed and with only your inner most feelings for company, it's amazing how real they are.

Sadio Mane's winner for Saints against Palace with seven minutes remaining was so important.

The fact that the other teams around Saints are now regularly winning games underscores that they cannot afford a sustained blip now.

Though this season will still be hailed a success no matter what happens in the final furlong, bettering the last campaign, it would without doubt be a flat ending if it all just fizzled away at the last.

That Saints got that win before a nice little break from league action was vital.

It has given them a chance to go away and clear their minds and refresh and refocus on what is to come.

The top four may well be a long shot, but any of those teams from third to seventh that put in a great run between now and the end of the season will get in there.

Many of those sides are playing each other, so it is still up for grabs.

If not then Saints will at least want to ensure they finish at least sixth, which obviously means ahead of one of Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool and Tottenham, to ensure they are not sweating until the FA Cup final on whether they have got into Europe, and when their season will start with regards to possible qualification for that next season.

The Palace game was an occasion that might be one of those that at the end of the campaign feels like a turning point.

It was pretty much the point at which the margins had got so fine that Saints couldn't afford anything but a win to keep the big dream alive.

They got it and it sets up a tremendous last ten games.

Blurred lines...

WE do live in a bizarre society.

It's one where double standards often rule.

Much has been made this week of sexism in sport, with videos showing the abuse that females have got from male fans simply because of their gender.

No doubt much of this will be portrayed as harmless banter. No doubt that is how much of it is intended.

But that doesn't mean to say we should tolerate it.

We would tolerate it if it were based on the colour of somebody's skin.

Adam Rant finds it all quite difficult. That line between banter and abuse is so often blurred, and while we should never take ourselves too seriously and should enjoy a laugh, there is a fuzzy line in the sand.

When you have been on the end of some of it simply for where you come from, you understand.

For most it is banter, but one or two hide behind that as a disguise for something which has far more of a sinister edge to it.

The truth is that you cannot stop everything, so you simply have to hope that society can at least behave in a civilised manner. Adam Rant's hopes are not high though, because it takes comparatively so few to cause these problems.

Faded glory

IT has been good to see some boxing back on terrestrial TV.

Its appearances have been few and far between but Carl Frampton graced the ITV screens last weekend.

The sport really needs to think about its public image. Its former glory, in the pro ranks at least, has faded.

Though the American pay-per-view market remains highly lucrative, and Sky Sports of course cover the sport pretty well, it has been to the detriment of the sport in terms of wider public engagement in this country.

Those who are boxing fans will seek it out, of course, but many of the more casual viewers have abandoned the sport.

That has not only been the case for boxing but a number of other sports as well.

It was nice to see something coming back into the public domain in this way, rather than the otherwise one-way trend of sport disappearing from the screens of those without satellite subscriptions.

SOUTHERN Daily Echo

FIND THE BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £27,000

or £1,000 nearest miss prize...

PLUS 70 consolation prizes of £15 each week

20 for Southern Daily Echo
20 for Daily Echo Bournemouth
10 for Dorset Echo
10 for Sunday Independent
10 for Brighton Argus

FIND THE BALL is a test of skill and football knowledge and is open to readers of the Southampton, Bournemouth, Dorset Echos, Brighton Argus and Sunday Independent, Plymouth.

You have to use your skill and judgement to determine the exact centre of the ball.

Mark an X with a ballpoint pen on the picture where you consider that position to be – clear rubber stamps and self adhesive labels will also be accepted.

Every coupon will be carefully examined and the jackpot prize will be paid to the entrant whose cross marks the exact centre of the ball when the photograph was taken.

If the Jackpot is not won, £1,000 will be added to next week's jackpot.

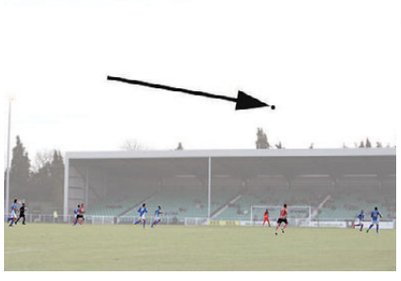
The nearest-miss prize of £1,000 will be paid out each week to the competitor whose cross is nearest to the centre of the ball when there is no jackpot winner.

When a jackpot has been won the next week's prize reverts back to £5,000 and the nearest-miss prize stays at £1,000.

If the Jackpot is not won after 46 weeks, when standing at £50,000, the nearest miss prize of £1,000 will be paid out and the jackpot will remain at £50,000 each week until there is a jackpot winner, then the jackpot starts again at £5,000, with the nearest miss prize remaining at £1,000 each week.

If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.

RESULTS



CLOSING DATE FOR POSTAL ENTRIES
Thursday 9am, 12 March, 2015
Names of winners will be published on Saturday, 14 March or 15 March 2015

Winners

Competition number **S08**

JACKPOT WINNER **NO WINNER**

CONGRATULATIONS
Mr D Newton, Brighton, Sussex
who wins the nearest miss prize of £1,000

The following competitors each receive a consolation prize of **£15**

A Alderson, Southampton, Hants
S Barstow, Bishopstoke, Hants
M Bennett, Eastleigh, Hants
N Bull, Southampton, Hants
E Cobbold, Hamble, Hants
N Cutler, Christchurch, Dorset
K Davis, Southampton, Hants
J Gammon, Southampton, Hants
S Harfield, Southampton, Hants
J Jenkins, Fareham, Hants
G Jessup, Southampton, Hants
N Kyriacou, Southampton, Hants
L Lake, Southampton, Hants
B Lawrence, Southampton, Hants
K Murtagh, Southampton, Hants
G Pike, Eastleigh, Hants
S Smith, Chandlers Ford, Hants
J Taylor, Southampton, Hants
S Watkinson, Romsey, Hants
W Williams, Southampton, Hants

Rules

1. You are allowed a minimum of 60 crosses and a maximum of 450 per coupon. Coupons with 451 or more will be disqualified. Entries altered defaced or mutilated will be invalid. Crosses must be distinct and separate. **2.** Competitors may submit as many coupons as they wish. Members of a family can send their entries in one envelope with a covering postal order or cheque. **3.** No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, lost or mislaid. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. **4.** Payment may be made by postal order or cheque for the correct amount payable to Newsquest, and crossed '& Co.' Stamps **will not** be accepted in payment. **5.** A competitor cannot win more than one share of the prize money across all titles each week. **6.** The Editor's decision on winning entry or entries and matters relating to this competition is binding in honour only. NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERED INTO. **7.** Employees of NEWSQUEST Media Group and subsidiary companies and members of their families are not eligible to enter the competition. **8.** Address entries to FTB, Newspaper House, Test Lane, Southampton, SO16 9JX in a sealed envelope. Understamped entries are not accepted. **9.** Prize monies are held for and on behalf of winners. **10.** Do not send cash in the post. **11.** Winners will be required to participate in publicity. **12.** Photocopies not accepted. **13.** For rules go to www.dailyecho.co.uk/promotions/rules, www.newsquest.co.uk/terms or write in for a copy. **14.** If you pay by cheque your prize money will be paid to you once cheque has cleared.

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE ONLY

An incident in a Blackfield & Langley v Andover match

SAVE POSTAGE
For your convenience coupons may be posted in our **FIND THE BALL** collecting boxes located at selected newsagents and all branch offices

Deadlines for branch office collection boxes are as follows:
Bournemouth Echo 12 noon Tuesday
Southern Daily Echo 12noon Tuesday
Dorset Echo Closing time Monday

Deadlines for selected newsagents collection boxes as listed in:
Bournemouth Echo closing time Monday
Southern Daily Echo 10.00 am Tuesday
Dorset Echo Closing time Monday

A list of participating newsagents will be published in the Echos on the first Saturday of each month

Please use black/blue ink and capitals

7 March, 2015

TITLE ☐ MR ☐ MRS ☐ MISS ☐ MS
FIRST NAME _____
SURNAME _____
ADDRESS _____
_____
POSTCODE _____
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S09

I enclose cash/cheque/postal order Value £'s _____

On what day(s) do you purchase the Daily Echo?
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Do you have the paper home delivered?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Please cross box

☐ 60 CROSSES	£1
☐ 125 CROSSES	£2
☐ 200 CROSSES	£3
☐ 325 CROSSES	£4
☐ 450 CROSSES	£5

CASH PRIZE EVERY WEEK

Please complete entry form and send to:
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Cheques payable to newsquest

SOUTHERN Daily Echo

Cherries/Pompey Spotlight

CHERRIES 2014/15

AUGUST
9: Huddersfield Town (A) . . . . . .W 4-0
Pugh, Wilson 2, Kermorgant
12 Exeter (A) League Cup . . . . . .W 2-0
OG, Gosling
16: Brentford (H) . . . . . .W 1-0
Stanislas
19: Nottm Forest (H) . . . . . .L 1-2
Wilson
23: Blackburn Rovers (A) . . . . . .L 2-3
Pitman, Cook
26: Northampton (H) Lge Cup . . . . .W 3-0
Gosling, Pitman, Wilson
30: Norwich City (A) . . . . . .D 1-1
Wilson

SEPTEMBER
13: Rotherham (H) . . . . . .D 1-1
Cook
16: Leeds Utd (H) . . . . . .L 1-3
Surman
20: Watford (A) . . . . . .D 1-1
Arter
27: Wigan Athletic (H) . . . . . .W 2-0
Kermorgant, Francis
30: Derby County (A) . . . . . .L 0-2

OCTOBER
4: Bolton Wanderers (A) . . . . . .W 2-1
Wilson (2)
18: Charlton Athletic H . . . . . .W 1-0
Wilson
21: Reading H . . . . . .W 3-0
Wilson, Pitman 2
25: Birmingham City A 8-0
Pitman, Wilson, Ritchie, Pugh 3, Rantie 2
28: West Brom (H) League Cup . . .W 2-1
O'Kane, Wilson

NOVEMBER
1: Brighton . . . .W 3-2
Greer og, Pugh, Kermorgant,
4: Sheffield Wed . . . .W 2-0
Surman, Fraser
8: Middlesbrough A . . . . . .D 0-0
22: Ipswich Town . . . . . .D 2-2
Kermorgant, Ritchie
29: Millwall . . . . . .D 2-2
Cook, Pitman

DECEMBER
6: Wolves (A). . . . . .W 2-1
Arter, Ritchie
13: Cardiff City (H) . . . . . .W 5-3
Ritchie, Arter, Pugh, Kermogant, Wilson
17: Liverpool (A) Lge Cup . . . . . .L 1-3
Gosling
20: Blackpool (A) . . . . . .W 6-1
Ritchie (2), Wilson, Pitman, Pugh, Arter
26: Fulham (H) . . . . . .W 2-0
Pitman, Arter
28: Millwall (A). . . . . .W 2-0
Kermogant, Arter

JANUARY
3: Rotherham (A) FA Cup . . . . . .W 5-1
MacDonald, Stanislas, Fraser, Kermogant (2)
10: Norwich City (H) . . . . . .L 1-2
Ritchie
17: Rotherham United (A) W2-0
Elphick, Wilson
24: Leeds United (A) L0-1
31: Watford (H) W2-0
Kermorgant (pen), Ritchie

FEBRUARY
7: Wigan Athletic (A) . . . . . .W 3-1
Wilson 2, Kermorgant
10: Derby County (H) . . . . . .D 2-2
Ritchie, Wilson
14: Huddersfield (H) . . . . . .D 1-1
Kermogant
21: Brentford (A) . . . . . .L 1-3
Pugh
25: Nottingham Forest (A) . . . . . .L 2-1
Surman
28: Blackburn Rovers (H) . . . . . .D 0-0

MARCH
3: Wolves (H) . . . .W 2-1
Kermogant (2)
7: Fulham (A) . . . . . .W 5-1
Pitman (2), Ritchie (2), Cook
14: Blackpool . . . . . .H
17: Cardiff City (7.45pm) . . . . . .A
21: Middlesbrough (3pm) . . . . . .H

APRIL
4: Ipswich Town . . . . . .A
6: Birmingham City . . . . . .H
11: Brighton . . . . . .A
14: Reading (8pm) . . . . . .A
18: Sheffield Wednesday . . . . . .H
25: Bolton Wanderers . . . . . .H

MAY
2: Charlton Athletic . . . . . .A

GOAL JOY: Brett Pitman celebrating his second goal

EDDIE Howe saw his free-scoring Bournemouth side rack up another five goals against Fulham and smiled: "Thankfully we don't pay goal bonuses!"

The country's top scorers marched back to the top of the Sky Bet Championship courtesy of two goals apiece from Brett Pitman and Matt Ritchie followed by a late cracker from Steve Cook to seal a thumping 5-1 victory.

"I'm delighted with the win," said Cherries boss Howe. "We felt it was going to be a difficult fixture when you see players Fulham have, but we started well, we were very positive, we scored at good times and could have scored more.

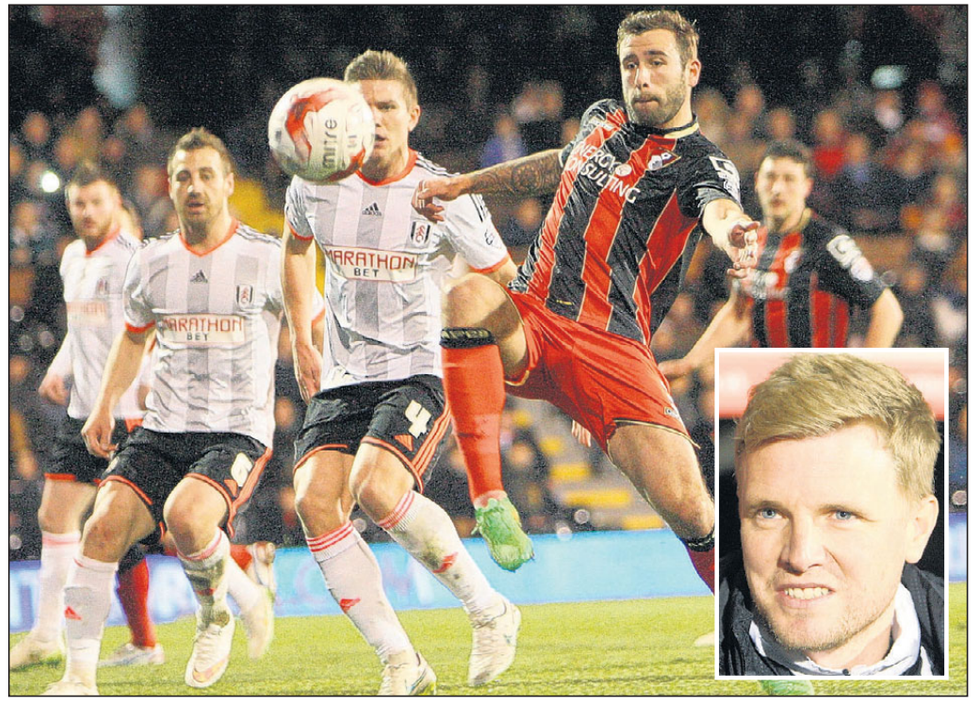
"Thankfully we don't have goal bonuses in the contracts. We took them out."

Pitman, only in the side due to an injury to Yann Kermorgant – who hit both goals in their midweek victory over Wolves – got the ball rolling just before the half-hour mark with his first goal since Boxing Day.

Ritchie doubled the advantage before half-time with a deflected effort and Pitman helped himself to a fine solo goal on the hour.

Matt Smith pulled one back with his first goal in Fulham colours, but any hopes of a home comeback were extinguished when Fernando Amorebieta was sent off for fouling Callum Wilson and Ritchie blasted in the resulting free-kick.

Cook then crashed in number five with six minutes remaining to put the icing on the cake for the Cherries, who made it back-to-back victories after five games without a win to put their promotion bid right back on track.



LATE CRACKER: Steve Cook. Inset: Eddie Howe

"During the five games we didn't win the performance levels were still strong," added Howe. "I didn't think there was anything wrong with the team and I think we have proved that. When we have that ruthlessness we are hard to stop.

"The lead has changed so many times it's almost become the tag no one wants. That's been the nature of it and it may stay that way until the end of the season, so back-to-back wins are so important."

Fulham, by contrast, are looking over their shoulders at the relegation battle – their cushion could be cut to five points by Saturday evening.

"It looked like top against bottom," admitted manager Kit Symons. "All credit to Bournemouth but we are bitterly disappointed with the performance.

"Until we are mathematically safe we have to get as many points as we can. We are conscious of what's below us. No one is under any illusions, you only have to look at the table. Everyone is fully aware of where we are."

GOT A STORY FOR US? CALL THE SPORTSDESK: 023 8042 4515

POMPEY 2014/15

AUGUST

9 Exeter City (A) . . . . . .D 1-1
Wallace
12 Peterborough (H) Lge Cup . . . . . .W 1-0
Storey
16 Cambridge United (H) . . . . . .W 2-1
Taylor, OG
19 Northampton Town (H) . . . . . W 2-0
Wallace, Westcarr
23 Oxford United (A) . . . . . .W 1-0
Westcarr
27 Stoke City (A) League Cup) . . . . . .L 0-3
30 Newport County (H) . . . . . .L 0-1

SEPTEMBER

6 Burton Albion (A) . . . . . .L 0-2
13 Southend United (A) . . . . . .L 0-2
16 Dagenham & Red (H) . . . . . .W 3-0
Dunne, Wallace, Barcham
20 Wycombe Wanderers (H). . . . . .D 1-1
Ertl
27 Hartlepool United (A) . . . . . .D 0-0

OCTOBER

4 York City (A) . . . . . .D 0-0
7 Northampton (H) . . . . . .L 1-2
Taylor
11 Mansfield Town (H) . . . . . .D 1-1
Robinson
18 Bury A . . . . . .L 0-3
21 Stevenage H . . . . . .W 3-2
Wallace, Storey, Devera
25 Shrewsbury Town A . . . . . .L 1-2
Wallace

NOVEMBER

1 Carlisle United (H). . . . . .W 3-0
Westcarr, Storey, Hollands
8 FA Cup 1st rd: Aldershot (H) . . . . . D 2-2
Wallace, Hollands
15 Plymouth Argyle A . . . . . L 0-3
19 FA Cup R1 replay: Aldershot A . . .L 0-1
22 Morecambe (H). . . . . .W 3-0
Westcarr, Wallce (2)
29 Tranmere Rovers (A). . . . . ..L 1-3
Wallace

DECEMBER

13 Accrington Stanley (H) . . . . . .L 2-3
Bean, Westcarr
20 Cheltenham Town (A) . . . . . .D 1-1
Atangana
26 AFC Wimbledon (H) . . . . . .L 0-2
28 Luton Town (A) . . . . . .D 1-1
Taylor

JANUARY

10 Newport County (A) . . . . . .L 0-1
17 Burton Albion (H) . . . . . .D 1-1
Wallace
24 Southend United (H) . . . . . .L 1-2
Webster
31 Wycombe Wanderers (A) . . . . . .D 0-0

FEBRUARY

7 Hartlepool United (H) . . . . . .W 1-0
Tubbs
10 Dagenham & R (A) . . . . . .D 0-0
14 Exeter City (H) . . . . . .W 1-0
Wallace
21 Cambridge United (A) . . . . . .W 6-2
Wallace, Tubbs 3, Robinson, Taylor
24 Tranmere (H) . . . . . .W 3-2
Westcarr, Taylor (2)
28 Oxford United (H) . . . . D 0-0

MARCH

3 Northampton (A) . . . .L 1-0
7 Accrington Stanley . . . . . .A
14 Luton Town . . . . H
17 Cheltenham Town (7.45pm) . . . . . .H
21 AFC Wimbledon . . . .A
28 Shrewsbury Town . . . . . .H

APRIL

4 Carlisle United . . . . . .A
6 Plymouth Argyle . . . . . .H
11 Morecambe . . . . . .A
14 Stevenage (7.45pm) . . . . . A
18 Bury . . . . . .H
25 Mansfield Town . . . .A

MAY

2 York City . . . . . .H

Non-league Football

ANOTHER LEVEL

IN ACTION: Ben Strevens playing for Eastleigh

"THE only real difference I'm finding, between playing for this team and clubs I've been at in the past, is on a Saturday. The grounds are a bit different and there might not be as many fans. You do miss some of the stadiums and big crowds.'

Those were the words of Ben Strevens in January last year, spoken at a time when Eastleigh were embroiled in a very real fight to get out of the Conference South and playing their football in front of average home gates of 680 people, ***writes PAUL McNAMARA.***

A mere 14 months on, and the indefatigable midfielder is looking back on a weekend when his club's Silverlake Stadium hosted 4,126 paying patrons, Conference Premier high-flyers Macclesfield Town and, for good measure, the live television cameras.

To complete an occasion that would have been difficult for even the most optimistic Spitfires' supporter to envisage when their team was striving for promotion into non-league's top-tier a year ago, Eastleigh delivered a resounding display to record a 4-0 victory over their visitors, a team that was playing in the Football League as recently as 2012.

There really is only one place to begin this conversation, then.

"A lot of work had been done behind the scenes to make sure it was a big crowd," said Strevens.

"It was the biggest crowd the club has had and, with it being on BT Sport and them (Macclesfield) being third in the league, to put in a performance like we did was probably the biggest moment since I've been at the club.

"After getting promoted last year, that's the next level that we've gone to now.'

Has Eastleigh's startling progress, then, which has seen average attendances for home games this term climb above the 1,500 mark, surprised Strevens, who, when he arrived at the Silverlake in 2013, was described by the club's manager Richard Hill as the 'model professional'?

"It's surprising in the fact that you look at how different the ground is now, compared to last year, and the increased crowds.

"That's due to a lot of work behind the scenes, by Stewart (Donald, Eastleigh's chairman) and everyone here, trying to get the fans through the door – and obviously the hard work that's being put in on the pitch and the position that the team has got into now.

"Being in and around the play-offs is helping to get more supporters in and I think a lot of work was done to get a lot of youngsters here on Saturday.

"If we can put in good performances when they (the off-pitch personnel) get the crowds here, hopefully that will get the people coming back and the crowds will keep rising."

With his acknowledgement that the team's endeavours on the pitch are central to keeping the punters descending on Stoneham Lane in their droves, and the Spitfires right in the midst of a battle to secure a play-off spot, Strevens accepts that the heat is now on Hill's men when they step out to play.

It is, though, says the 34-year-old, exactly the type of pressure that footballers welcome.

"If we were in a position now,

Non-league Football

FOR STREVENS

where we were in mid-table and not going down or going up, then there's very little to play for," he said.

"There's personal pride and you want to do well – but to be in the positon we're in, that's what we wanted at the start of the season.

"We wanted to be in and around the play-offs come this time of year; we've got ourselves there now so we've got to enjoy it and try and have a good end to the season like we did last year."

From a personal perspective, the end to that 2013/2014 season couldn't have been any better for the player, who was rightly voted by the club's fans as their Player of the Year for the team's Conference South title winning campaign.

After such a prosperous season for his side, one during which he was living under the weight of his final year studies for a Sports Science degree at the University of Roehampton, Strevens was grateful for the supporters' accolade.

"It was massive. Especially in a team that has won the league.

"We were the best team in that league, so for people to take the time and vote for me as the best player out of that group was nice.

"I looked around some of the performances, and if we'd had a Players' Player of the Year I'd have probably voted for someone like a (Dan) Spence or a Greener (Michael Green); someone who was consistent week in, week out.

"So for people who came and watched those games to say that I was one of the most consistent players was really nice.

"A few times in my career I've been runner-up for those awards, but I'd never won one.

"It was nice to get some personal recognition, yeah.'

Football is a hard, some might say cruel, business.

With the demands ratcheting up this term, and neither Donald nor Hill content for Eastleigh to tread water in their first ever season at this level of the game, last year's championship winning side has already undergone some significant surgery.

Strevens, though, has remained absolutely integral to his manager's plans.

"I came here last year because I wanted to play football, and I did play a lot of games (in my first season).

"There's been a turnover of players, but there's a good group of us that have come from last year and still played this season. That's the way football goes.

"The team that got promoted last year, there were some good players there and when they weren't playing so much this year there was obviously going to be teams wanting to take them.

"People like Fleets (Stuart Fleetwood, now on loan at Forest Green), Yemi (Odubade, currently at Woking, also on a temporary deal) and JC (Jamie Collins, who transferred to Sutton in January), they're good players, so it's not surprising that other teams are wanting to come and take them – and, for themselves, they probably wanted to go and play a bit of football.

"The gaffer is certainly adding a bit of quality.

"We're attracting players that maybe we couldn't have this time last year. There's a good feel about the squad, and as long as the results keep going well then the right decisions are being made."

TURN TO PAGE 12

Rodgers will respect Rovers in cup clash

LIVERPOOL manager Brendan Rodgers is keen to avoid the kind of mistakes which have seen many top sides falter in the FA Cup as he eyes a place in the semi-finals.

The Reds head into the weekend as favourites for the competition after fellow big guns Manchester United and Arsenal were drawn together in the last eight.

Sky Bet Championship side Blackburn visit Anfield on Sunday and while Rovers are 25 places below their hosts Rodgers insists they will be treated the same as Manchester City – second in the Premier League - were last weekend.

"They got their first league win away from home in four months in the week (at Sheffield Wednesday) but we will give them the same respect we would give Manchester City or any other team," said the Liverpool boss (below).

"It is a big game. We made it clear our intent in this competition was to get to the final and win it and to do that you have to beat different types of teams and Blackburn will come and look to make it difficult for us.

"I think (Rovers manager) Gary Bowyer has done an outstanding job since he has gone in there.

"He's had a similar pathway to myself in terms of working in youth development so he understands football clubs from the top to the bottom.

"He has gone in there in very difficult circumstances and stabilised the club and got everyone on the same path and has done an outstanding job."

While securing Champions League football for next season remains the priority Rodgers would dearly love to win some silverware in his third year in charge.

Having reached the semi-finals of the Capital One Cup he hopes to go at least one better in this competition, although he admits he is only interested in a final at Wembley.

"People say getting to Wembley for the semi-final is a big thing but not really. Winning and getting to the final is the big priority," he said.

"In many ways I wish the semi-final wasn't at Wembley because I think it takes a little bit away from it. For me Wembley should be the ultimate game.

"But of course it is a great opportunity if we do go through to play a game at Wembley, which we certainly wouldn't turn down.

"In domestic cup competitions we were unfortunate not to make the final and in the FA Cup we are giving everything we can to win a trophy while trying to fight to get into the top four.

"We want to get as high as we can - not just fourth - and win a trophy and if we can do that it will be a success."

Liverpool are the team of the moment with their Premier League form second-to-none and, although their attacking style is again winning plaudits, what is probably more significant is their new-found defensive resilience.

They have conceded just six goals in nine league matches since the turn of the year, during which time they are unbeaten.

NON-LEAGUE NEWS – SEE PAGES 14-19

Szczesny must work to regain place

WOJCIECH Szczesny can regain his place as Arsenal number one if he dedicates himself completely to the task, according to former double-winning goalkeeper Bob Wilson.

The Poland international is expected to feature in the FA Cup quarter-final at Manchester United on Monday night, provided he recovers from the virus which stopped him from being on the bench for the midweek Barclays Premier League win at QPR.

Szczesny, 24, has not started a league game since the 2-0 defeat at Southampton on New Year's Day, where he was culpable for the goals and afterwards was also caught smoking in the showers. That indiscretion resulted in a fine from the club.

Despite Colombian David Ospina making the most of his opportunities in recent weeks, Wilson, part of the Gunners' 1971 league and FA Cup-winning side, still believes 6ft 5in Szczesny has what it takes to cement a regular place between the posts once more.

"From the time Wojciech got into the Arsenal first team there were a lot who asked if he was good enough and I thought this boy has the potential to really be a solid, outstanding goalkeeper, I still believe that because he is - for his position - still relatively young," Wilson, 73, told Press Association Sport.

"All I would a say to him is 'look, Arsenal is one of the greatest football clubs. If you go from here I am not sure you are ever going to get a club as good as this. At your age now you need to dedicate yourself to being the best you can be, to the exclusion of a lot of other things in your life'."

Wilson recalled: "I was a very late starter, but once I was in the Arsenal side, my family almost came second to my ambition.

"I devoted every moment to regular training and then when the boys went in for their bath, I stayed out (on the field).

"I wanted to make sure I never ever left the game saying I could have been better, so my message to Wojciech would be 'come on, prove how good you can be'."

Gunners boss Arsene Wenger is confident Szczesny, who has played in Arsenal's last two FA Cup ties, will be sharp if selected again.

"Wojciech is used to playing in big games and I think he will take that as a big challenge to show his quality," the Gunners boss said.

"He works very hard in training, so I don't think that will be a problem."

Arsenal head to Old Trafford in search for a first win there since September 2006, but on the back of good league form.

Wenger said: "We are the holders of the FA Cup, this competition is important to us and we want to go there to produce a result."

Non-league Football

EMBRACING THE

From page 11

Far from viewing recent player trading as reason to fret over his own place in the Spitfires' team, Strevens is embracing the challenge of retaining his starting berth, while relishing his club's ability to entice high-calibre performers to join their promotion chase.

"Last year it was me, JC and Suvs (Glen Southam) as the three centre-midfielders, pretty much.

"To see that those two have gone, I got on really well with them, they're both really good players, who did brilliantly for this club – so, to see players like that leave, you've got to be on your game to keep your place in the team.

"We've brought in in more quality players - Stanners (Craig Stanley) has played at this level for I don't know how long, Harry (Pell) has come out of the league to come and play here - so there is that added competition for places again.

"In the group that we've got, players are going to want to play and do well for themselves.

"It is putting pressure on - a good pressure that you've got to play well or someone else can come in and do the job just as well as you."

As admired and respected by his peers as he is by those in the Silverlake's expanding stands, Strevens recognises that he is one of the men who carries the responsibility for ensuring that none of the famed spirit and camaraderie of Eastleigh's class of 2013/2014 is eroded during this evolutionary process.

And the former Wycombe player cites his team's unwavering resilience as evidence that the bond within this determined group is only getting stronger.

"Someone like JC, for instance, was a massive, massive personality on and off the pitch last year. He was probably one of the main reasons we did so well, the way he was so funny and was getting the boys going from game to game.

"He was a big miss. I travelled in with him so I do miss him on a day to day basis, but there are certainly a lot of characters still here.

"Macca (Craig McAllister) is very bubbly around the place and Harry's a younger JC. He doesn't shut up!

"There are still the personalities there, just a change in personnel.

"Of course, I'm one of the older heads and I've been skipper a few times this year. There have been times when I've had to step out of my comfort zone and take on a role that I'm not used to.

"But I've enjoyed it as well. Hopefully, between now and the end of the season, Deano (Dean Beckwith) or Reidy (Paul Reid) will be playing so I won't have to be skipper again, but if I am I'll just do the same as I have been before.

"It's something from last year that has carried on into this year: that belief that we can win every game.

"We know we've got some good players here. We've added some real quality, league players who have come from playing at a higher level.

"We know, even if we go behind in games that we've got the players to get us back into it.

"There is a real self-belief and we've had this mentality, again carried over from last year that we won't lose two games on the bounce. If we do suffer a defeat, we know that we've got to try and put in an improved performance in the next game.

"So far - off the top of my head - I don't think that we've lost two on the bounce.'

Strevens' memory is every bit as reliable as his tenacious and consistently influential on-field displays have been, from the minute he made his Spitfires' debut against Sutton United in August 2013.

Eastleigh, indeed, have not been defeated in back-to-back league matches this season.

It is that sort of form, and the mind-set which the accomplishment of such a feat requires, that enables Strevens to draw comparisons with his current team and the sides at Barnet and Dagenham & Redbridge with whom he enjoyed runaway Conference Premier title success in 2005 and 2007, respectively.

"Definitely (there's a similarity).

UNDER-11S FOOTBALL FESTIVAL PICTURES – SEE PAGES 40-41

Non-league Football

EXTRA CHALLENGE

HEADS UP: Ben Strevens in action for Eastleigh against Gateshead, and, inset, celebrating with Jack Midson

There is that team spirit.

"I know I'm harping on about last year, but there was such a close-knit team-spirit and group that got us over the line then, and I think that's got even stronger as the year has gone on now.

"There are definitely those same characteristics in the team that we had at Barnet and at Dagenham. At those clubs, we ended up pulling clear and winning the league but the run we're on at the minute, if we can sustain it, we're just going to get stronger and stronger.

"It looked a few weeks ago as if Barnet were home and hosed but now, all of a sudden, Bristol Rovers are top. It's quite a tight league and if we can get a few results together – and we've got quite a few of the top teams coming up (to play) – we can be right in the mix come the end of it.'

Allowing himself a momentary glance into a future that has Eastleigh confounding all reasonable expectations when they set out on their maiden term at non-league's top table, by gaining promotion into League Two, Strevens agrees that his club can draw inspiration from the identity of a host of sides that were trailing in Barnet's wake a decade ago.

Stevenage, Exeter, Morecambe, Accrington, Crawley Town and Burton are among a group that was competing in that 2004/2005 Conference Premier, but which can now be considered established Football League outfits.

"I don't think any team has come out of the Conference and gone straight back down, which says a lot for this league.

"I genuinely think that, without any disrespect to the teams at the bottom end of this league, they wouldn't cope in League Two.

"But certainly the teams in the play-off spots right now, they could cope in that division.

"I'm not saying that they'd go up and win it, but I definitely feel they'd be in mid-table and well away from a relegation battle.

"This league is strong, and it's a tough, tough league to get out of. Teams like Barnet and Bristol Rovers are good sides and they've got good players. At the moment, they'd be more than holding their own in League Two.

"If we were to get up, there could be similarities to draw with those teams (that have gone up and become fixtures in the Football League). Of course it'd be hard at first, like we found it a bit difficult at the start of this season, but we'd have a good chance if we could get up again. We've got to do the hard part first and get ourselves in the play-offs, then who knows from there?"

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL 8-PAGE PULLOUT – BEGINS PAGE 21

Pair banned for spitting

NEWCASTLE'S Papiss Cisse and Manchester United's Jonny Evans will serve suspensions of seven matches and six matches respectively for spitting, the Football Association has announced.

The duo have been punished following an altercation between the pair during Wednesday's Barclays Premier League clash at at St James' Park.

Striker Cisse accepted his FA charge on Thursday but defender Evans pleaded not guilty and his case was heard on Friday night.

The duo have now been handed lengthy suspensions, with Cisse's punishment one game higher than the standard tariff for spitting due to an elbowing offence earlier this season.

Cisse (right) reacted angrily to Evans' 38th-minute challenge on him during the Red Devils' 1-0 win in midweek and television replays suggested both men had spat in the direction of the other as the confrontation degenerated.

The incidents were not seen by the match officials but caught on video and Evans and Cisse were charged after a panel of former elite referees unanimously agreed they both had cases to answer.

An FA statement on Saturday read: "Both players were charged in relation to an alleged breach of FA Rule E1a in that in or around the 38th minute of the fixture they spat at each other.

"Mr Cisse accepted the charge and his suspension consists of six matches, which is the standard penalty for this offence, with an additional one match as he has previously accepted a violent conduct charge this season.

"Mr Evans denied the charge but it was found proven following an Independent Regulatory Commission hearing on Friday, resulting in a six-match suspension."

Both bans will begin with immediate effect, meaning Evans (above) will miss Monday's FA Cup quarter-final clash with Arsenal.

The Northern Ireland international, whose claim he would never spit at a fellow professional was backed up by United manager Louis van Gaal, will also sit out the league games against Tottenham, Liverpool, Aston Villa and Manchester City, the FA Cup semi-final if United get there, and the trip to Chelsea if they do not.

Cisse, meanwhile, will be unavailable for the Magpies' league fixtures against Everton, Arsenal, Sunderland, Liverpool, Tottenham, Swansea and Leicester.

There will only be three games remaining when Newcastle's leading scorer, who issued a statement apologising for spitting, becomes available once again for West Brom's visit to Tyneside on May 9.

Cisse's ban was longer than six games due to an incident in December when he elbowed Everton's Seamus Coleman and was also caught out on video evidence.

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Forbes to bow out

ANDY Forbes toyed with the idea of hanging up his boots at the end of the last season.

But the Gosport Borough striker-defender means business this time round.

The 35-year-old former Eastleigh and Winchester City cult hero insists the 2014/15 season will be his last.

Confirming his intention to hang up his boots, Forbes said: "I thought it was a good time to finish last season after the FA Trophy run, but then I missed it as soon as the season started again and came back.

"But I don't think there is any turning back this time.

"I've let the club know my intentions so they can start thinking about getting someone else in."

Forbes's spectacular non-League career took off as a striker with Andover. Since then he has won the FA Vase with Winchester, been crowned Non-League player-of-the-year for 2004, helped fire Eastleigh up the pyramid and played in the FA Trophy final at Wembley for Gosport.

"I couldn't have wanted much more from a non-League career," he said.

Murphy in Town move

FORMER AFC Bournemouth goalkeeper Shane Murphy has re-signed for Sydenhams One outfit New Milton Town.

Murphy, who has previously played for Wimborne Town, Christchurch and Hamworthy United, ended his previous stint at New Milton to join Dorchester Town.

But the 21-year-old has opted to join the promotion-pushing Linnets for the remainder of the campaign.

LATE GOAL: Danny Finnigan

Finnigan late goal impact

DANNY Finnigan scored one of his most significant goals in Amesbury Town colours last Saturday.

The ex-Downton marksman netted in the dying stages as the Blues recorded a formidable 3-2 win over leaders Team Solent to blow the Sydenhams One promotion race wide open.

The win moved Amesbury up to second, four points behind James Taylor's Southampton Solent University pacesetters with a game in hand.

Solent took the lead through Rafael da Costa and had chances to extend it before Finnigan levelled with a deflected shot from the edge of the area.

That goal lifted Town and they took the lead two minutes into the second half when Craig Lewis, their new signing from Shrewton United, fired home.

Solent levelled things up again through da Costa and, with the points there for the taking, it was Finnigan who struck gold in the 83rd minute after Nic Turpin had pounced on a defensive error.

Delighted Amesbury boss Gareth Horner declared: "I'm extremely happy with the result.

"On the back of the derby win against Laverstock last week, it was important we picked up another three points against the leaders.

"By winning, we have blown the promotion race wide open with Solent, Tadley Calleva, New Milton and Cowes Sports well and truly amongst it.

"The lads were great and really dug deep in the dying minutes as Solent threw everything at us.

"The centre halves were immense and, when they were breached, Paddy Crease in goal was outstanding. The lad has grown throughout this year and installs confidence in the side."

Lambert savours enjoyment factor

Whitchurch defender Ryan Lambert in action

RIGHT-BACK Ryan Lambert says the best thing about playing for Whitchurch United is the enjoyment factor.

Few gave the Jam Boys a hope in hell of finishing in the top half of the Sydenhams Premier this season, let alone the top six, when Carl Bennett took over in difficult circumstances last summer.

The former Romsey Town boss inherited only a handful of existing Whitchurch players and had to start again virtually from scratch.

But the side he built contained a core of ex-Sholing and Romsey players who took a ready-made camaraderie to Longmeadow.

And that, according to 24-year-old Lambert, goes a long way to explaining why Whitchurch have been lording it with the Wessex 'upper-class' all season.

"The best thing about being at Whitchurch is that we all enjoy it. There are a lot of good vibes at the club," he said.

"When we lose we might get bad vibes for ten or 15 minutes, but we get rid of them very quickly.

"When you don't get paid for playing football, you need to enjoy it and there's a good atmosphere at Whitchurch.

"Carl brought most of us over from Romsey and we've done quite well.

"A lot of us were at Sholing reserves together playing for Dave Fear and Dobbo (Gavin Dobson). We all knew we could play football and we hit the ground running and upset quite a few people at the beginning of the season.

"A few players disappeared with Josh Green going to Winchester and Adam Pearson to Bashley, but they've both come back.

"We've had our ups and downs, but we've done well to gel as a team.

"If you look at our record against Petersfield, Newport and Winchester we've taken points off each other (winning one and losing one). At the beginning of the season you set yourself targets and it's a big thing for us to compete with teams like that."

Lambert is in his last three months as a trainee PE teacher at Cantell School, Southampton, and plans to return in September fully qualified.

During his time with Sholing, Romsey and Whitchurch he has played in various positions, but admitted: "I like to have an attacking role. I've played up front and as a right winger before and I've scored six this season from right-back."

Lambert is fast approaching 40 league and cup appearances for Whitchurch this term, but he has taken a bit of a back seat of late.

"I've just had an operation on my nose and am struggling to breathe when I run," he explained.

● While Lambert enjoys playing, his real football passion is managing the BTC Southampton's under-12s, who are ready to be crowned Tyro League Division One champions (see page 16).

MORE NON-LEAGUE NEWS ONLINE: WWW.DAILYECHO.CO.UK

Non-league Football

Keith Emmerson, in uniform, carries the Capital One Cup trophy before the game

Poole star lifts cup

POOLE Town midfielder Keith Emmerson got his hands on the League Cup before John Terry did last Sunday.

The 32-year-old, a Royal Army Physical Training Corps instructor, played a key role at Wembley Stadium ahead of Chelsea's 2-0 final victory over Tottenham.

While in military uniform, Emmerson collected the trophy from a suspended trapeze artist and placed it on a plinth as part of the pre-match build-up.

He then took his seat in the media area and watched the likes of Eden Hazard, Diego Costa and Harry Kane strut their stuff in front of an 89,294 crowd.

Skipper Terry opened the scoring for Chelsea before a Costa shot deflected in off Kyle Walker to ensure the trophy headed to Stamford Bridge.

Keith Emmerson playing for Poole Town

BACK ON TARGET

LAST season he top-scored for Hythe & Dibden with 19 league goals.

But, until last Saturday, the well had run dry for Seun Olabiyi, ***writes WENDY GEE.***

He made up for the drought in double-quick time, however, scoring twice in quick succession to fire the Watersiders on their way to a 3-2 Sydenhams One win over Ringwood Town.

Due to pitch problems at their new Clayfields home, Hythe have fallen way behind with their league fixtures this season, so these were welcome points indeed.

It was a tonic, too, for player-manager Lee Burch to see Olabayi's name back on the scoresheet.

"They were Seun's first goals of the season," he said.

"He'd scored for the reserves and every time we'd played a friendly he'd netted, but not when it came to competitive first-team games.

"Going right back to our first game of the season against Andover New Street he had a good chance that he put just over the bar and it had been like that ever since.

"Seun's done well in every game he's played but strikers tend to get judged by how many goals they score, particularly when the team's not winning.

"But he was superb again on Saturday and it was good to see him get the goals to go with it.

"We went 1-0 down and then Seun scored two in about five minutes.

"Ringwood equalised just before half-time and Elliott Head, our new signing from New Milton, won it for us with a couple of minutes left from Simon De'Ath's cutback.

"It was Elliott's first goal for us and he deserved it. He plays centre midfield and popped up in the right place at the right time."

Burch is the first to admit it wasn't Hythe's finest hour but, given the fragmented state of their season, he was just please to pocket the three points.

"We've played better and lost and we've also played worse and won. We didn't play great, but I'll happily take it," he smiled.

"We'll move forward step by step and see if we can have an impact on what's going on at the top."

Hythe had been due to host title-chasing Amesbury Town at Clayfields on Tuesday but, once again, the pitch was deemed too soft to play on.

With Tadley Calleva's title hopes rocked 3-0 by Cowes Sports last Saturday, Amesbury had climbed to second after inflicting a 3-2 defeat on league leaders Team Solent.

Burch is still convinced, however, that James Taylor's Southampton Solent University side will wind up top of the class.

"They've got one or two players who are head and shoulders above the Wessex Premier, let alone Wessex One," he said.

"We've got all the top teams left to play, apart from Solent, and hopefully we can put some dents in a few people."

Hythe have added to their squad with ex-Alresford Town midfielder Chris Morris and towering ex-Andover utility man Sam Floyd from Lymington Town.

With the Watersiders having played only 15 league fixtures ahead of today's scheduled trip to Fleet Spurs, the extra bodies will help them cope as they wade through the backlog.

Frustrating as the lack of action has been, Hythe can still find a lighter side to their misfortune.

"Steve Green left us a while back to move to the other side of the world – and he's still one of our top appearance makers!" said Burch.

"And Jon Brock can only play for us on and off and it's a running joke in the dressing room that whenever he's available, the game gets called off. He's our unlucky charm!"

AMONG THE GOALS AGAIN: Seun Olabiyi in action

Non-league News

Reserves boss goes

WINCHESTER City reserve team manager Dean Smith has stood down, leaving Grant Orchard to take charge in the interim.

Director of football Dave Malone (pictured) explained: "Dean had intimated that he would not be able to continue next season due to work and family reasons.

"However, after an exchange of views, it was mutually agreed that we would make a change sooner rather than later.

"The club would like to thank Dean for his effort and commitment and for helping the development of some of our promising, young players."

Blackmore to United

EX-AFC Bournemouth youngster Lewis Blackmore is one of four players to register with Sydenhams Premier outfit Hamworthy United over the past week.

Blackmore (pictured), who has previously turned out for Weymouth and New Milton, is joined by Mark Brock, Oliver Clayton and James West at the County Ground.

Final date

THE date and venue of the North Hants Senior Cup final has been confirmed.

The all-Sydenhams Premier Division showdown between Winchester City and Whitchurch United will take place on Wednesday, April 22 at Andover New Street's Foxcotte Park home (7.45pm).

Both sides enjoyed comprehensive semi-final victories with Winchester thumping Tadley Calleva 5-1 and Whitchurch ousting Overton United 4-1.

GOT A NON-LEAGUE STORY FOR US? CALL: 023 8042 4515

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Semi-final venues

ALRESFORD Town and Fareham Town have been selected as the venues for this season's Sydenhams Wessex League Cup semi-finals.

Alresford's Arlebury Park HQ will host the first showdown between last year's beaten finalists Petersfield Town and Bemerton Heath Harlequins this Tuesday.

The second semi between AFC Portchester and Blackfield & Langley with follow at Cams Alders, Fareham, on Tuesday, March 17. Both are 7.45 kick-offs.

Pay what you want

SHOLING have announced that their Easter Monday fixture against Bashley in the Southern One South & West will be 'pay what you want' at the gate.

Admission for adults will be at their discretion, but all kids will get in free of charge.

Other activities are planned on the day and the match is likely to be a 1pm kick-off (to be confirmed).

"We need to entice a few more people through the gate. If it pays off, we'll do it again," said chairman/manager Dave Diaper. "It's all about getting more people in and getting that secondary spending (on refreshments etc)."

Ryan loan

GRITTY midfielder Perry Ryan has left Havant & Waterlooville to join divisional rivals Farnborough on loan until the end of the season.

Ryan, 22, had fallen down the pecking order at Westleigh Park and said that joining relegation-battling 'Boro was "a no-brainer".

Havant have several ex-Farnborough players in their squad and Ryan said: "Nic (Ciardini), Josh (Huggins) and Scott (Donnelly) speak highly of everyone in and around the club, so it was an easy decision. It will be a great opportunity for me to play games and help get the club up the table where they belong."

Welcoming Ryan to Cherrywood Road, Farnborough boss Spencer Day said: "Perry's someone who's been on my radar since Havant signed Brian Stock. He's young, but he's experienced at this level and he's a man. That's exactly what we need right now."

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS! BTC under-12s, back row (left to right): Morgan Hooper, Fred Vine, Jake Floyd (captain), Jake Clarke, Harvey Richards, Jake Muckart, Ryan Lambert (manager/coach); front row: Ben Wells, Dan Storey, Harry Allan, Adam Lewingray, Mark Sampson, Harry McFarlane, Nathan Howton.

Lambert proud of runaway champs

TO SAY BTC Southampton's brilliant under-12s have been the class act of the Tyro League Division 2 this season would be an understatement.

With their league campaign now over, they sit proudly unbeaten at the top of the table having won 13 out of 14 fixtures and drawn the other.

Baddesley Park, their nearest rivals, still have one game to play next week. But even if they win, it would still leave BTC as runaway champions by 14 points.

Ryan Lambert, the boys' infectiously enthusiastic player-coach, couldn't be prouder of his young BTC charges, most of whom have been with him for years.

The 24-year-old former Sholing and Romsey Town right-back, now part of Whitchurch United's high-flying Sydenhams Premier Division side, said: "I've had the majority of these lads since they were five or six years old, so it's been a nice journey.

"They've been with me all the way through from mini soccer.

"Our side feeds into Hedge End Youth FC at Berrywood Primary School in Botley, which caters for players from Reception to Year 6. As soon as they're old enough to start school they can come along."

But for a deflected last-minute equaliser by Eastleigh Juniors at Wide Lane on January 18, BTC would have finished the campaign boasting a perfect league record.

But that 1-1 draw cannot take the shine off what has been a truly magnificent season for Lambert's lads.

Each and every one of the players have turned in heroic performances with Jake Floyd instrumental as captain and top gun Jake Clarke (26) and Harry McFarlane (10) weighing in with the bulk of the goals.

BTC have won promotion to Division One next term and, unsurprisingly, Lambert, a trainee PE teacher at Cantell School, Southampton, is keen to continue overseeing the side's development.

"They're a lovely bunch of lads and I'll definitely be managing them again next season," he said.

"They're like my little brothers and I know all their mums and dads so there's a really nice atmosphere which is quite hard to come by.

"I enjoy managing more than I do playing. There's no stress on me."

PROUD: Ryan Lambert

UNDER-11S FOOTBALL FESTIVAL – SEE PAGES 40-41

Non-league Football

PLEA: Salisbury FC fans outside Salisbury Guildhall as they ask people to sign their Save Our Stadium petition Picture: Joel Holt

SAVE OUR STADIUM!

COMMITTED Salisbury FC fans braved the cold and wet last Saturday to drum up backing for their 'Save Our Stadium' campaign.

They stood in the rain outside Salisbury Guildhall getting support for their petition which has so far attracted more than 1,300 signatures.

That, coupled with more than 1,700 backers online, means there are in excess of 3,000 people keen to see the phoenix club playing at the Raymond McEnhill Stadium, home of the former Salisbury City FC, for the start of next season.

Organiser Thom Belk, who launched the campaign on social media, plans to gather as many signatures as possible before showing the petition to councillors at Salisbury Area Board's meeting on March 12.

"Our aim is to get a group of us at the meeting and do a presentation on the petition and provide a covering letter to show everyone," he said.

"Hopefully we will get more signatures than the highest attendance at the Ray Mac (3,408 for the Conference South play-off final in May 2013).

Former Salisbury City FC owner Mark Winter added: "We want to raise awareness of the situation and hopefully the trustees will take this seriously."

Salisbury city councillor for the Bemerton ward, Tom Corbin, stood with the rain-soaked supporters for a few hours.

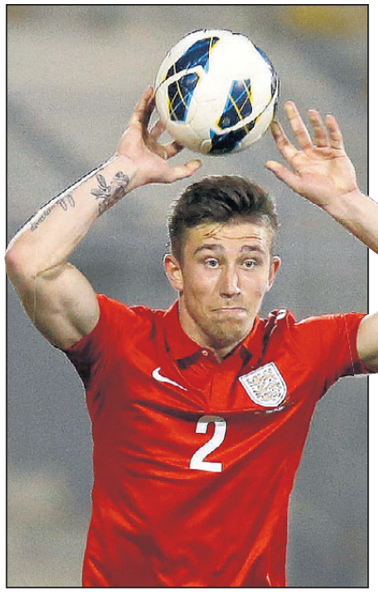
"I've seen real determined fans who want to bring football back to the Ray Mac," he said.

"It's really important everyone gets behind the club. Salisbury FC needs you to support them.

"The petition was about showing your support and bringing people together."

Salisbury have the support of their former playing staff too. Goalkeeper Mark Scott and tough-tackling defender James Clarke have both signed the petition, while last season's manager Mikey Harris – now Portsmouth's under-18s academy coach – says he is on board for the "dedicated supporters."

MARK SCOTT



ANGUS MACDONALD

Former Salisbury star is fined after 'verbal spat'

FORMER Salisbury City defender Angus MacDonald has been fined by Torquay United.

The 22-year-old, Winchester-born ex-Reading trainee was involved in a brief verbal spat with supporters during the Gulls' 3-0 FA Trophy semi-final, second leg defeat against Wrexham last Saturday.

In the heat of the battle, the young defender shouted at a small section of fans at Plainmoor – a reaction deemed "unacceptable" by the club.

A Torquay statement said: "Football is a passionate game and Angus has been exemplary in his commitment to the United cause this season. Both Angus and Torquay United would like to apologise to the Yellow Army for this reaction."

MacDonald himself said: "I apologise to the fans I shouted at as I should not have got myself involved.

"I was desperate to do well and let my frustration get away with me."

Manager Chris Hargreaves, whose side lost 5-1 on aggregate, said: "Saturday was a big day for all of us and we certainly understand any frustration at the result.

"I have spoken to Angus and he accepts responsibility for his actions.

"He is a young lad and he must use this as a learning experience."

MacDonald began his career at the Reading FC Academy and had various loan spells while at the Royals, including stays at Basingstoke Town, Salisbury and Torquay.

Following his release from Reading, he joined Salisbury on a one-year contract in August 2013, ironically scoring his first goal – an overhead kick – against Wrexham.

He signed for Torquay in July last year in the wake of the Gulls' relegation to the Vanarama Conference.

Wrexham will meet Conference North heroes North Ferriby United in the Trophy final at Wembley on March 29 (1.30pm).

North Ferriby drew 3-3 on aggregate with Bath City and won the penalty shootout 4-2.

The Humbersiders become only the fourth side in history to reach both the FA Vase and Trophy finals, the others being Hillingdon Borough, Tamworth and Forest Green Rovers.

TAG RUGBY PHOTOS - SEE PAGES 44-45

Non-league News

Stefan's back on goal form

FORMER AFC Totton crowd favourite Stefan Brown has returned to Hungerford Town on loan – and is already firing.

The 25-year-old was on the scoresheet as the Crusaders beat Bideford 2-0 last Saturday to go fourth in the Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division.

Brown, 25, found the net 28 times for the west Berkshire outfit last season before leaving for Conference South side Maidenhead United in May.

But, with his playing time limited at York Road, he has returned to Hungerford to assist with their play-off push.

Brown (pictured), who hails from the Reading area, grew up playing alongside Theo Walcott and Charlie Austin for Newbury Schools.

Having spent time at Football League outfit Reading as a youth, he launched his non-League career with Reading Town and Thatcham.

But it was at AFC Totton where he found national fame, scoring a hat-trick inside 15 minutes of going on as a sub in the Stags' 8-1 FA Cup first round proper demolition of Bradford Park Avenue in November 2011. He won the Budweiser player-of-the-round award for that record-breaking feat.

Brown left Totton for Basingstoke Town at the end of the 2012/13 and briefly returned to the Testwood Stadium on loan the following season.

● QPR's ex-Poole Town striker Charlie Austin has become an ambassador for the Hungerford Town Football Academy.

He and Reading's Republic of Ireland international Alex Pearce are backing the Berkshire club's full-time football and education programme for 16 to18-year-olds due to be launched in September.

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Academy will be huge boost

STEVE Cuss believes Wimborne Town's ambitious plans to launch an academy in September will give the first team a huge boost.

The Magpies hope to provide a full-time academic course and football programme for youngsters aged 16-19.

Both elements will take place at Cuthbury with the Dorset club keen to secure a minimum of 20 teenagers who could, potentially, end up in the senior men's or women's teams.

A full-time coach will be recruited to work closely with Cuss within the academy, which has been partially funded by prize money from this season's FA Trophy run.

"We feel this is the right way to go in terms of attracting players and giving them the opportunity to develop," said Cuss, who holds the role of head of community at AFC Bournemouth.

"The hope is that after two or three years they will come into our first team.

"We're keen to move the club forward and there are two ways you can do it.

"One is to throw all the money in at the top end, have highly-paid players and try to move up the leagues.

"Another is to get an infrastructure at the bottom and allow a little bit of time to develop. With my coaching background, that's the route I'm keen to take, although that's not to say we're not going to sign experienced players. We still want to do that."

Cuss's experience with Cherries has convinced him the talent is out there.

"AFC Bournemouth have access to top-end elite players who they offer academy places to, but they also release players," he said.

"There will be one or two players who have been released from pro clubs such as AFC Bournemouth that would like to continue their fooball education, albeit at a lower level.

"The academy forms a big basis of the plans and aspirations Wimborne have got."

● Wimborne have missed out on a place in the Dorset Senior Cup final.

Ben Watson and Lewis Morgan scored either side of the break as Dorchester beat them 2-0 in Tuesday's Avenue semi-final. For Dorch, it was sweet revenge for the FA Trophy defeat they suffered at Wimborne's hands earlier in the season.

Mark Jermyn's side will meet arch-rivals Weymouth in the final following the Terras' dramatic 3-2 extra-time win over Poole Town.

Victory dedicated to Poore

VERWOOD Town's players dedicated victory to birthday boy Carl Poore after they had run riot 5-1 away to nine-man Brockenhurst.

Goals from Jordan Fisk, Tyler Rutten, Tom Whelan (2) and Charlie Gajic saw the Potters make it eight wins out of the last 12 games, pulling them further clear of the Sydenhams Premier relegation zone.

It was the perfect present for Poore (pictured), who turned 32 on the day of the match, and the boss was feeling buoyant after the final whistle.

"We had four missing from the previous week so we were down to the bare bones, but the lads who filled in did a great job," he said.

"It took us a while to get into our stride, but the lads produced the goods and they dedicated the win to me, which was nice.

"We are in good form at the moment and are beginning to catch the pack in mid-table.

"We've got a few tough games coming up, but we have no reason to fear anyone."

Poore, though, was the first to admit that Brockenhurst did not get the rub of the green against the Potters, stating: "They were unlucky in that they had a goal disallowed and hit the crossbar and had a few decisions go against them."

That was an understatement in the eyes of bewildered Badgers boss Pat McManus who described some of the refereeing decisions as "mind-blowingly incorrect."

Brock had Lewis Gundry and Tom Pigford sent off, a goal disallowed and a massive penalty shout waved away. Plus, McManus is absolutely certain that Verwood's second and third goals were offside.

Given the amount of decisions that went against Brock, it was hard to pick the one that infuriated McManus the most.

Arguably, it was the turned-down penalty appeal when Brad Magookin went down under a challenge in the area. As a result of that contact, he played no further part in the game.

"Brad went one-on-one with the full-back inside the area and was blatantly taken out high up the ankle, resulting in him having to come off injured.

But the referee went to consult the linesman who said 'no' it wasn't a penalty," said McManus.

"It was a mad afternoon, you had to be there to believe it.

"Some of the decisions from the officials were mind-blowingly incorrect.

"To have a blatant penalty shout turned down when everyone knew it was a penalty and we had to take a lad off injured because of it is just wrong.

"When Tom Pigford was sent off, the ref had given a free-kick against him but some of the Verwood players were screaming that it was a two-footed tackle.

"The ref was standing a metre away but, once again, he had to consult his linesman to see if it was two-footed or not!

"I've never been one to publicly slate referees, I understand they have a difficult job, but for their decisions to do that much damage in one game is incredible. It was farcical and it ruined it as a spectacle.

"I felt sorry for our lads. It wasn't fair on them or on the people who had paid to go through the gate."

INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR WHITCHURCH ACE

IT'S not often Sydenhams Wessex League players get called away on international duty.

But Whitchurch United will have to make do without midfielder/full-back Taurean Manders for the time being while he is back home playing for his native Bermuda.

The 28-year-old dual-signed Sholing player flew back to his birthplace Hamilton last week to continue an international career that began against Barbados a decade ago.

CALL-UP: Taurean Maunders

Wendy Gee
wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk
NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

Since then he has amassed 13 caps for his country, the highlight being six World Cup qualifiers in 2011 when he was arguably Bermuda's most consistent performer.

Much-travelled Manders, son of Bermuda international cricketer Andre, plied his trade in America with Bradenton Academics before moving to Canada for spells with Capital City and York Region Shooters. He also had a stint in Antigua with Barracuda FC.

Manders is currently based in Southampton with his cricketing brother Tre, 20, who plays for Sarisbury Athletic CC.

He first appeared on the local non-League scene with Bashley before joining the Foresters' Southern League rivals Sholing during the summer.

He has been dual-registered with Whitchurch since January.

Bermuda have two friendlies against Grenada this month before playing the second leg of their 2018 World Cup qualifier against Bahamas on March 29.

When interviewed by Bermudan newspaper The Royal Gazette, Manders admitted he had taken time to acclimatise to the English game.

NO-NONSENSE

"The style of play in the English lower leagues is a bit different than what I am used to," he said.

"It's a lot more direct and the defending is no-nonsense.

"I have played in centre midfield, but I've mostly played at right-back or left-back. I've always moved around, so that's nothing new for me.

"It's more like a battle than actually football at times and it's taken me a while to adapt."

Manders, part of a 54-man squad for the World Cup qualifiers, added: "I always get excited about playing international football. I'm still as motivated as ever."

SUNDAY FOOTBALL - SEE PAGE 38

Non-league Football

GOSPORT AWAIT WINNERS OF SHOLING'S SEMI-FINAL

SHOLING will be playing for the right to face Gosport Borough in the Hampshire FA Senior Cup final when they host AFC Bournemouth's development squad in the second semi-final this Wednesday (7.45pm).

Gosport, beaten semi-finalists last year, booked their ticket to next month's Fratton Park showpiece with a 3-1 midweek win at Farnborough.

Southampton-based hairdresser Adam Wilde trimmed 'Boro down to size with two goals – the second a magnificent free kick – and Sam Pearce added the crowning glory with a trademark header 17 minutes from time.

Delighted Gosport boss Alex Pike (pictured) said: "I have never won the Hampshire Senior Cup and Borough have waited 27 years for a chance to regain the trophy. It would be nice to put that one to bed."

Wendy Gee
wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk
NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

Given the quality in AFC Bournemouth's development squad, it will be a tall order for Sholing to get through Wednesday's semi-final after a distinctly mediocre season in the Southern One South & West.

But the Boatmen have a good pedigree in the county competition and manager Dave Diaper would dearly love to lock horns with his good friend Pike in the final.

"Me and Alex get on well," he said.

"Bournemouth will be a tough cookie for us, but I'd love to play Gosport.

"They've had a great season in the Conference South and are in with a strong chance of the play-offs which is good to see.

"Getting to a Hampshire Senior Cup final will be a new experience for Alex whereas we've been there a couple of times in our recent history. It would be great to get there again."

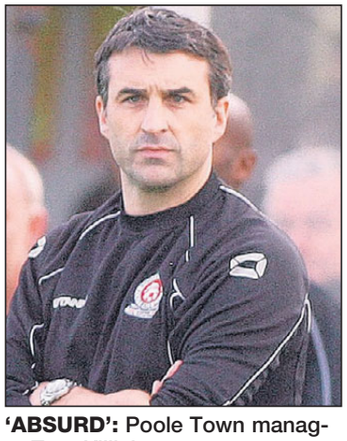
Gosport midfielder Mike Carter – one of Sholing's Vase heroes last season – still works for Diaper as an electrician at BSA Regal in Southampton. "If we do reach the final, I might have to give Mike a job in London that night!" laughed the Boatmen's boss.

Gosport's win at Farnborough was their second in four days over Spencer Day's side, having edged them 2-1 on Saturday in the Conference South at Privett Park.

A mistake by ex-Saint Andy Robinson allowed Dan Bennett to fire the north Hampshire visitors ahead, but Gosport atoned for their sins with a Dan Wooden equaliser and Justin Bennett's 32nd goal of another prolific season.

Pike confirmed the signing of former AFC Bournemouth midfielder Lewis Blackmore before Saturday's game.

Dolphins left kicking their heels



'ABSURD': Poole Town manager Tom Killick.

MANAGER Tom Killick reckoned it was "a bit absurd" for his Southern Premier leaders Poole Town to be without a fixture today.

No team has played fewer games than the Dolphins, with nearest rivals Corby and Weymouth both three ahead coming into this weekend.

Yet those two were both due to tick another fixture off the list this afternoon (Saturday), while Poole were left kicking their heels.

The Dolphins had been due to face Hereford United, but the Bulls went out of business in January and had their league record expunged.

"It's a bit absurd to have got a free fixture," said Killick, who recently celebrated his 600th game at the Tatnam helm.

"I know it's our turn because we had been due to play Hereford and every team has had that.

"But it's not like last year when fixture congestion was down to postponements due to our pitch.

"This year it has really been down to the success we've had in cup competitions.

"I feel perhaps the league should have made sure we had a game this Saturday. One of the teams that have played four more matches than us could easily have had a free Saturday."

Because of the lack of league action, Killick took a strong side to Weymouth on Tuesday to continue their defence of the Dorset Senior Cup.

The evening did not end well, however.

After twice leading the semi-final through Steve Devlin (penalty) and Luke Burbidge, the ten-man Dolphins were pegged back to 2-2 by Chris McPhee's stoppage-time leveller having lost Marvin Brooks to a straight red card with two minutes to go.

The tie spilled into extra time and, with nine minutes remaining, the Terras made their numerical advantage count when Alec Fiddes thumped a 25-yarder in off the woodwork.

It meant the Dolphins surrendered an unbeaten run in the county competition, dating back to November 2011.

Poole were this week in the process of completing a loan deal for winger Mason Walsh from AFC Bournemouth's development squad.

Walsh – son of former Liverpool and Tottenham striker, Paul – has previously spent time with Dorchester Town.

ALL TODAY'S LIVE RESULTS – SEE PAGE 46

Non-league News

Awford in permanent Hawks deal

NICK Awford has joined Havant & Waterlooville on a permanent deal until the end of the season after parting company with Portsmouth by mutual consent.

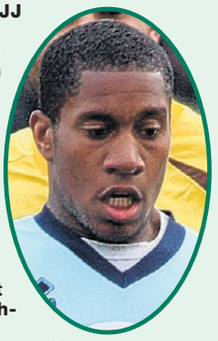
Awford, 19-year-old son of Pompey boss Andy, has already spent loan time in non-League with Gosport Borough, Chelmsford City and Bognor Regis Town.

A Portsmouth Academy graduate, he made his debut for the SkyBet League Two club as a late substitute against Sheffield United in August 2013. His first start followed in last season's Capital One Cup defeat at Premier League outfit Stoke City.

Awford made his Conference South debut for the Hawks last Saturday, stepping in for the injured Brian Stock at Boreham Wood.

H&W conceded early, but bounced back to beat the deposed league leaders 2-1 in a grandstand finish to squeeze themselves back into the play-off frame.

Scott Donnelly scored one penalty and missed another for the Hawks before JJ Hooper popped up with the last-minute winner.



Wood substitute Ben Nunn had got his 56th-minute marching orders for giving away the second penalty by bringing down Bradley Bubb (pictured) from behind.

Havant tumbled back out of the play-off zone on Tuesday as Hampshire rivals Basingstoke Town won 3-2 at home to Bath City.

The Dragons' win catapulted them back up to third, pushing the Hawks down to sixth on goal difference from fifth-placed neighbours Gosport Borough.

Saints Spotlight

'BEST-EVER' SAINTS

SAINTS' ROUTE TO RUNNERS-UP PLACE IN 1983/84

Aug 27 Nottingham Forest 0 Saints 1 (Wallace 66)
Attendance: 14,626
Saints keeper Peter Shilton produced an impressive display against the club he helped to two European Cup triumphs.

Aug 29 Saints 0 QPR 0
Attendance: 19,522
Lawrie McMenemy described The Dell stalemate as a ''drab affair'.

Sept 3 Saints 1 (Baird 72) Arsenal 0
Attendance: 19,377
Ian Baird's winner preserved Saints unbeaten start to the campaign in front of England manager Bobby Robson.

Sept 6 Liverpool 1 Saints 1 (Mills 62)
Attendance: 26,331
Mick Mills free kick six minutes from time gave Saints a point after Peter Shilton had conceded his first goal of the season

Sept 10 Sunderland 0 Saints 2 (Moran 22, 67)
Attendance: 12,716
Moran's brace powered Saints to victory at Roker Park.

Sept 17 Saints 3 (Williams 2, Armstrong) Man United 0
Williams scored twice in the first 16 minutes against Ron Atkinson's United.

Sept 24 Aston Villa 1 Saints 0
Attendance: 21,207
Striker Frank Worthington was sent off as Saints slipped to their first league defeat.

First Division 1983/84 – after seven games

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
West Ham	7	6	0	1	18	4	18
Manchester United	7	5	0	2	11	8	15
SAINTS	**7**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**8**	**2**	**14**
Liverpool	7	4	2	1	8	4	14
Ipswich Town	7	4	1	2	18	8	13
Aston Villa	7	4	1	2	11	9	13
Nottingham Forest	7	4	1	2	11	9	13
Arsenal	7	4	0	3	13	8	12
QPR	7	3	2	2	13	8	11
WBA	7	3	2	2	11	11	11
Coventry City	7	3	2	2	11	12	11
Birmingham City	7	3	2	2	7	8	11
Luton Town	7	3	1	3	14	8	10
Everton	7	2	3	2	5	7	9
Watford	7	2	2	3	14	12	8
Tottenham	7	2	2	3	10	11	8
Sunderland	7	2	1	4	6	13	7
Notts County	7	2	0	5	8	15	6
Norwich City	7	1	2	4	8	11	5
Stoke City	7	1	1	5	5	15	4
Wolves	7	0	2	5	5	18	2
Leicester City	7	0	1	6	4	18	1

Oct 1 Saints 1 (Worthington 82) Wolves 0
Attendance: 16,589
Saints moved back up to second position after Worthington's late bundled effort.

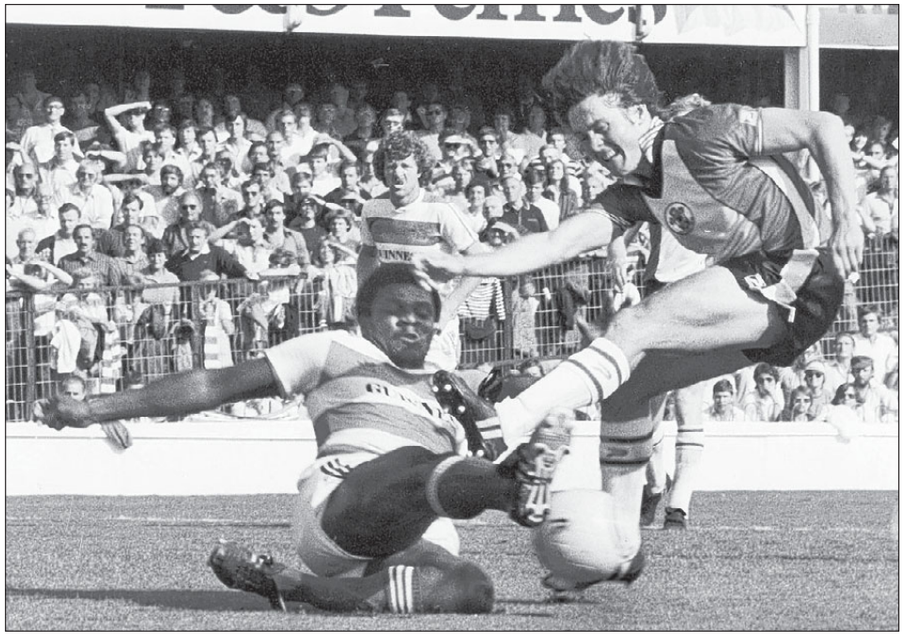
Oct 22 Luton Town 3 Saints 1 (Armstrong 68)
Attendance: 12,359
McMenemy said his side can have ''no complaints'' after they were ''run ragged'' by the Hatters.

Oct 29 Saints 3 (Williams 4 Holmes 52 Moran 68) Ipswich 2
Attendance: 18,515
Moran's second half winner ensured Saints came from behind to snatch all three points in an ill tempered affair at The Dell. Future Saint Russell Osman was dismissed for the visitors.

Nov 5 Norwich City 1 Saints 0
Attendance: 14,303

Nov 12 Saints 1 (Moran 19 pen) West Bromwich Albion 0
Attendance: 16,450
Moran stepped up to score the winner after he was fouled.

Nov 19 Saints 0 Notts County 2
Attendance: 15,009
continued on facing page



BLOCKED: QPR's Bob Hazell slides in to stop this Steve Moran effort at The Dell.

IN CONTROL: Frank Worthington on the ball

SHIELDING THE BALL: Steve Moran in action against Manchester United.

RISING HIGH: Frank Worthington is beaten

AS Saints enjoy their best season since the mid-1980s, the club's last team to finish in the top four of English football is backing the current crop to reach the Champions League.

Simon Walter
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Peter Shilton

It is 31 years since Saints last finished in the top four of English football's top flight.

But the class of 1983-84 reckon Ronald Koeman's side can achieve Saints' highest league position since they finished as runners-up to Liverpool under Lawrie McMenemy.

Although we didn't win anything I was very proud to get into three cup finals with Southampton and finish as runners-up in what is now the Premier League. We had a lot of flair; great players like Steve Williams, Mick Mills, David Armstrong, Mark Wright, Steve Moran and the Wallace brothers. It was a good mix of youth and experience. The Southampton team now is having another terrific season.

Despite all the players leaving they've been able to better what they did last year.

From a defensive point of view they have a very solid base and Fraser Forster has pushed himself into contention for an England spot. I would say he is now England's second choice [behind Joe Hart].

It's not easy to do as well as he has done in his first season in the Premier League. Southampton took a chance on him and it's probably worked out far better than they thought it would.

The back five is their strength. We did well defensively and probably had more flair but the current team has the ability to grind out results and shut up shop, as they did at Manchester United. But they're also capable of putting a lot of goals away as they did against Sunderland. So they can do both, they're not a one-trick team.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that they can make it into the Champions League. If they don't I think a top-six finish should still be enough to make Ronald Koeman the Manager of the Year. But there's still a long way to go to the end of the season.

FOR ALL THE LATEST SAINTS NEWS AND VIEWS AS THEY BATTL

Saints Spotlight

BACK TOP FOUR BID

against QPR at The Dell.

GOING FOR GOAL: Danny Wallace on the attack against Leicester.

to the ball by Gordon McQueen.

SHOOTING STAR: Steve Moran fires in an effort against Luton at Kenilworth Road.

Reuben Agboola

I've been very impressed. The teams are totally different in that we had a lot more experience, we'd been playing in the old first division for many years.

But like today's team we were very strong away from home. When I first joined Southampton we hadn't won away for many years – the champagne came out when we first won away because it was such a rarity.

Once we got the system in place it took a season or two to bed in but we became very hard to beat and our form started to take care of itself.

This season has been very similar. We had a very attacking sweeper system, effectively playing three at the back with the likes of Mick Mills and Mark Dennis bombing on.

What Southampton do well at the moment is hassle teams away from home. Teams are more difficult to break down at St Mary's, like West Ham, who got the point they came for the other week.

They still picked up results without Wanyama, Schneiderlin and Alderweireld because everyone knows their role in the system, as we did. Others can slot in. They stuffed Everton 3-0 with half the team out.

Jose Fonte is someone who has really come on. I didn't use to rate him, I didn't think he took enough responsibility, he was happy to play second fiddle too often for me. But he's now very dominant. I think he's risen to the role of captain and playing for Portugal has probably helped as well.

If they can get into the Champions League that will be another reason for more top players to join the club in the summer.

Mark Dennis

Next season I'll have my own box so it would be lovely to watch Champions League football from it. If we stay clear of injuries, I think we've got every chance. Ronald Koeman has been very, very cute because it's not all about him, his coaching staff have been sensational. Sammy Lee has been around the block, he's a massive influence, along with Koeman's brother Erwin, who I hear is a tremendous coach.

The fans have really warmed to the manager and he has something about him. He's cool, calm and collected - you don't see him lose his temper much.

continued on page 30

from facing page

Moran missed a penalty on 36 minutes as Saints suffered a shock loss against a County side who had failed to win in their previous 11 games.

Nov 26 Coventry City 0 Saints 0
Attendance: 11,579
Ian Juryeff made his Saints debutas a 77th minute sub.

First Division 1983/84 – after 14 games

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	15	9	4	2	25	9	31
West Ham United	14	9	2	3	26	11	29
Manchester United	14	9	2	3	27	15	29
Tottenham	15	8	4	3	27	21	28
Luton Town	15	8	2	5	25	21	26
Coventry City	15	7	4	4	20	18	25
Nottingham Forest	15	7	3	5	25	20	24
SAINTS	**14**	**7**	**3**	**4**	**14**	**10**	**24**
Aston Villa	15	7	3	5	23	25	24
QPR	15	7	2	6	24	15	23
Norwich City	16	6	5	5	23	20	23
Ipswich Town	15	6	3	6	26	19	21
Arsenal	15	7	0	8	26	21	21
Sunderland	15	6	3	6	16	19	21
WBA	15	6	2	7	19	23	20
Birmingham City	15	5	3	7	14	18	18
Everton	15	5	3	7	9	17	18
Notts County	15	4	2	9	18	26	14
Stoke City	15	2	6	7	15	26	12
Watford	15	2	4	9	20	30	10
Leicester City	15	2	4	9	16	30	10
Wolves	15	1	4	10	11	35	7

Nov 30 Leicester 2 Saints 1 (Worthington 83)
Attendance: 14,181
Mark Dennis, a new signing from Birmingham City, made his debut for Saints.

Dec 3 Saints 3 (Wallace 35 Armstrong 44 Mills 60) Stoke 1
Attendance: 15,301
Saints came from behind to snatch their first win in four games.

Dec 10 Tottenham 0 Saints 0
Attendance: 29,711

Dec 17 Saints 2 (Blake og 6 Hagan og 79) Birmingham 1
Attendance: 15,128
Future Pompey defender Noel Blake was among the two Birmingham own goal villains.

26.1283 West Ham 0 Saints 1 (Wallace 64)
Attendance: 22,221
The Hammers side included Trevor Booking and Frank Lampard senior.

Dec 27 Saints 1 (Armstrong 21) Watford 0
Attendance: 20,659
David Armstrong's header ensured that Saints secured their third win in a row.

Dec 31 Arsenal 2 Saints 2 (Moran 62, 75)
Attendance: 27,596
Saints came from 0-2 down at Highbury.

First Division 1983/84 – after 21 games

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	21	13	5	3	36	16	44
Manchester United	21	12	5	4	39	23	41
West Ham United	21	12	3	6	35	19	39
SAINTS	**21**	**11**	**5**	**5**	**24**	**16**	**38**
Nottingham Forest	21	11	3	7	38	27	36
Luton Town	21	11	2	8	36	30	35
Aston Villa	21	10	5	6	33	30	35
Coventry City	21	9	7	5	29	24	34
QPR	20	10	2	8	31	20	32
Norwich City	22	8	7	7	26	25	31
Tottenham	21	8	6	7	33	35	30
Sunderland	21	8	6	7	24	27	30
Arsenal	21	9	2	10	37	31	29
Ipswich Town	21	8	5	8	31	27	29
WBA	21	7	3	11	23	33	24
Everton	21	6	6	9	11	23	24
Watford	21	6	4	11	33	38	22
Leicester City	22	5	7	10	31	40	22
Birmingham City	21	5	4	12	17	26	19
Notts County	21	5	3	13	27	40	18
Stoke City	20	3	7	10	20	34	16
Wolves	21	3	5	13	18	48	14

Jan 2 Saints 2 (Moran 81, Armstrong 85) Aston Villa 2
Attendance: 18,963
Saints, for the second game in succession, came from two down to snatch a point.
continued on page 30

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Cheltenham 2015

EIGHT-PAGE SOUVENIR GUIDE TO RACING'S GREATEST FESTIVAL

The final McCOY

JEZKI
Champion Hurdle

MR MOLE
Champion Chase

CARLINGFORD LOUGH
Gold Cup

The big hopes for AP's last Festival

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
StanJames.com
who are you with?

Day 1 focus

Tuesday, 10 March
Channel 4/At The Races

Fly in bid for record treble

Hurricane Fly (above left) and Jezki (right) will renew their rivalry in the Stan James Champion Hurdle, but they will find Faugheen (left) the horse to beat in the big race of the first day of the Cheltenham Festival

> *If he was a year younger, or maybe two or three years, he'd be favourite, wouldn't he?*
>
> ***– Trainer Willie Mullins on Hurricane Fly***

WHOEVER thought of Cheltenham's #Illbethere Twitter hashtag ahead of the Cheltenham Festival might want to have a go at picking the Lottery numbers.

Anyone worth their salt will indeed want to be there for the start of Tony McCoy's swansong at the greatest meeting of them all.

Months of anticipation end with the opening Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle and its accompanying roar, and those in attendance on day one are in line to witness more than one watershed moment.

Human and equine legends will be made across four thunderous afternoons, but few races throughout the week will generate as much interest or emotion as the Stan James Champion Hurdle.

The premier event for two-mile hurdlers in the world has been staged since 1927 and has been claimed by some iconic names in the sport.

Hatton's Grace and Sir Ken in the 1950s, Persian War and Bula a few years on, the titanic clashes in the 1970s with Night Nurse, Monksfield and Sea Pigeon, all are etched in jumping folklore. And what of Istabraq, who was only robbed of an unprecedented fourth consecutive Champion in 2000 when foot and mouth disease forced Cheltenham to be cancelled?

There has been another bona fide giant of National Hunt racing since in Hurricane Fly, the much-decorated pride and joy of the Willie Mullins powerbase in Closutton, County Carlow.

Two years ago he became the first horse since Comedy Of Errors in 1975 to regain the Champion title and, having had to give best to Jezki 12 months ago, he is back in search of equalling Istabraq.

Written off in many quarters following last year's Festival and subsequent defeat, again to Jezki, at Punchestown, it seemed retirement could be an option. But he has incredibly returned like a new horse this term, three times putting old foe Jezki to the sword.

He will again have a huge following, but in a twist that was bound to happen at some stage given the incredible strength in depth of the Mullins stable, his main danger appears this year to come from within.

For it is would-be superstar Faugheen who heads the betting. He arrives in the Cotswolds unbeaten in eight starts and with the memory of his performance in the Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle lingering in the memory.

More wins have followed since, including a very taking success in the Christmas Hurdle at Kempton.

Adding further spice to the pot is that McCoy deserted Jezki last year in favour of My Tent Or Yours, but is in the plate this time as he looks for a third and final win in the race after Make A Stand in 1997 and Binocular in 2010.

Is this the final passing of the baton moment that signals a new generation among the two-mile elite? The bookmakers think so, although Mullins clearly has a soft spot for his veteran warrior.

He said: "If he was a year younger, or maybe two or three years, he'd be favourite, wouldn't he? He's done everything he's been asked, he's beaten the reigning Champion Hurdler (Jezki).

"His age is the only thing against him, and possibly people feel Cheltenham is not his track, yet he's won twice there. I'm going to give him the respect he's earned, anyway."

But it is not a two-horse race, far from it. Do not count out Jezki, who will have the hill play to his strengths and be driven on by a tide of McCoy emotion, and Nigel Twiston-Davies will not have a word said against The New One, the premier hope for Britain.

He was unlucky last year when hampered by the sadly fall of Our Conor and made up lots of ground be less than three lengths behind Jezki in third.

Never a horse that seems to please everyone, his career record is exceptional and he could silence the Irish roar if Sam Twiston-Davies can play him last of all.

Either way, this race has 'must-see' written all over it.

As if that is not enough excitement, one of the most captivating spectacles of the meeting happens on day one, as a field of brave young novices have their mettle tested over a flying two miles in the Racing Post Arkle Challenge Trophy.

And a small piece of history will be made this year in the OLBG Mares' Hurdle, as a new winner is guaranteed after the six-year domination of the wonderful Quevega.

Mullins prepared Quevega with absolute precision to win on her seasonal debut no less than five times in the Grade One heat and will try to repeat the trick with hot favourite Annie Power.

FACT!

Five horses have won the Stan James Champion Hurdle three times – Hatton's Grace (1949, 1950, 1951), Sir Ken (1952, 1953, 1954), Persian War (1968, 1969, 1970), See You Then (1985, 1986, 1987) and Istabraq (1998, 1999, 2000), with Hurricane Fly (2011 and 2013) one of nine dual winners.

THEATRE QUEEN is set to turn out quickly for the National Hunt Chase following a remarkable effort in defeat at Doncaster at the end of last month.

The eight-year-old refused to jump off at Taunton earlier in the campaign, and looked like doing the same in the Grimthorpe Chase.

She did eventually consent to race and, despite losing many lengths at the start, finished powerfully up the Town Moor straight to finish a creditable fourth. Fledgling trainer Mark Wall, who also rides her, insists she has plenty of appetite for racing.

He said: "I think there's a reasonable chance she'll run in the National Hunt Chase.

"People call her all sorts of names and I end up defending her, but she really isn't the moody mare that a lot of people think she is. It's definitely not that she doesn't want to race. Once she's in a race, she sticks her head down and gets on with it."

SIR PETER O'SULLEVAN is looking forward to savouring another Cheltenham Festival after being allowed to return home in time for his 97th birthday earlier this month.

'The Voice of Racing' has had to endure an extended hospital stay in recent months, and said: "When you get to 97, you can't expect not to have a few impediments!

"It is good to be back home. I've had five months in Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and King Edward VII Hospital, so it's just lovely to be back home.

"I'm certainly looking forward to the Festival – it's always very special, and I'm sad to be missing out this year. There are some interesting races to look forward to, and I just hope the weather is kind."

SIRE DE GRUGY will be sporting some eyecatching footwear as he defends his Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase title.

The nine-year-old has had his problems after an all-conquering 2013-14 campaign, with the Gary Moore-trained runner suffering a setback in the first half of the season before his belated return at Newbury saw him unseat Jamie Moore.

Sire De Grugy has since landed a confidence-boosting success under a big weight in a Chepstow handicap, and Moore senior revealed foot problems had necessitated a change to white plastic shoes rather than the usual metal racing plates.

He explained: "He had a corn before he went to Newbury, and it was touch and go whether I could run him or not. When he came back, we had to cut the corn out and because we had to cut so much out of the foot, he has to run in special shoes."

Festival preview

Gold Cup pinstickers' guide: pages 4-5

After a 23-year career, more than 4,300 winners and 20 champion jockey titles, Tony McCoy will retire at the end of the season. **Frank Malley** anticipates a fairytale finale at the Cheltenham Festival which could be...

All so Perfect

Tony McCoy is mobbed by fans in the winner's enclosure at Leopardstown after winning the Hennessy Gold Cup aboard Carlingford Lough last month – the day after announcing his plans to retire at the end of the season

THE script is written for one of the most emotional days in racing history.

If all goes to plan, at around 3.30pm on Friday, 13 March, Tony 'AP' McCoy, or simply 'Champ' to legions of fans and rivals alike, will stand tall in the saddle, punch the air with his whip hand and garnish a 23-year career with a third Cheltenham Gold Cup win.

And as the hats tumble from the sky and 'Come on my son' clichés resound around a course awash with Irish delirium and general euphoria, sport would have its perfect ending.

An ending fit for a 40-year-old galloping towards retirement in April with more than 4,300 jump winners and 20 champion jockey titles.

In all likelihood, there will never be another Tony McCoy. Never be another jockey with the cocktail of courage, mental strength, perseverance, obsessional appetite for self-sacrifice and God-given talent that has made McCoy such a unique competitor.

Which is what makes this Festival, the last time McCoy will urge thundering hooves up that hill, such a defining moment in sport.

It is so easy to take greatness for granted. We shouldn't.

Instead we should watch the videos of McCoy coaxing Edredon Bleu to a short-head victory in the Queen Mother Champion Chase in 2000, or study the way he realigned Wichita Lineman after clattering a couple of fences in the 2009 William Hill Festival Trophy to take it by a neck from Maljimar.

Then there are his two Gold Cup triumphs so far. The first was aboard the unfancied Mr Mulligan in 1997, a horse with a dodgy jumping history – but you would hardly have known it as McCoy pushed him to two mighty leaps late on to run away from the field.

The second was three years ago on Synchronised, a study in patience and horsemanship. For much of that race Synchronised looked to have been most inappropriately named. His gait lacked tempo and rhythm. His jumping was diffident. At half-way he was tailed off second from last in a race lent drama when Ruby Walsh pulled up Kauto Star.

Cue McCoy, kicking on Synchronised to hang on to a hot pace before launching a relentless and perfectly timed challenge which saw off The Giant Bolster and Long Run.

That was McCoy, a man who has broken an arm, a leg, both wrists, all his ribs, and collar bones and shoulder blades aplenty, as well as suffering punctured lungs in pursuit of his trade, at his brilliant, most obdurate, opportunistic best.

Could it happen again, this time on Carlingford Lough? The horse is unlikely to be among the favourites, but with the tide of sentiment running so high it would be a brave man who would bet against it.

"Cheltenham this year will probably be a little emotional for me," McCoy has admitted with typical understatement. The emotion, however, will be allowed to sink in only when the hard work is complete.

After all, this is the man who, when asked years ago if he enjoyed Cheltenham, replied tartly: "I'm going to Cheltenham to ride winners, not run a social club."

This is the man who prepared for the 2008 Festival in a cryotherapy chamber at -149° to speed recovery from injury.

Of course, we should not be blinkered. Cheltenham is about more than McCoy and the Gold Cup. It is the premier racing festival. While the Grand National remains the single most famous and eagerly anticipated race, Cheltenham has become the most prestigious four days in the racing calendar.

The Supreme Novices Hurdle, the Champion Hurdle, the Queen Mother Champion Chase, the Ladbrokes World Hurdle, the JCB Triumph Hurdle, the Gold Cup. The races trip off the tongue.

More than £600m is expected to change hands in bets this year, and more than 200,000 racegoers are likely to attend. The Irish, as usual, will be there in their thousands, lending a convivial and exciting ambience to the Cotwolds, which is only partially due to the intake of Guinness.

Some of the equine battles will be as good as racing gets. So will rivalry between the leading jockeys. Such as Ruby Walsh, who notched seven winners at the 2009 Festival and has accumulated a record 41 in total. Or what about Barry Geraghty, who has never failed to record a winner at the Festival since landing his first on Moscow Flyer in 2002 and has won 31 races in all.

In third place on that table comes McCoy with 30 Cheltenham winners, including three Champion Hurdles and three Arkles as well as those two Gold Cups. Yet third does not sit well with McCoy as a jockey or as a man.

As JP McManus, the owner in whose green and gold hoops McCoy has delivered such thrilling triumphs, says: "He is a credit to the game. It is a pleasure to have him around. AP is behind everything that is good. I am just so pleased and proud that I know him."

Cheltenham, evoking memories of Golden Miller, Arkle, Desert Orchid, Best Mate and Kauto Star, has witnessed its fair share of beloved champions and days of gut-wrenching emotion.

One last moment of magic from McCoy, however, and Friday March 13, 2015, might eclipse them all.

> *AP is behind everything that is good. I am just so pleased and proud that I know him* **– JP McManus**

Tuesday 10 March

Time	Race	Distance
1.30	Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle	2m110y
2.05	Arkle Challenge Trophy Chase	2m
2.40	Ultima Business Solutions Handicap Chase	3m1f
3.20	**Stan James Champion Hurdle Challenge Trophy**	**2m110y**
4.0	OLBG Mares' Hurdle (David Nicholson Mares' Hurdle Race)	2m4f
4.40	Toby Balding National Hunt Chase (Amateur Riders)	4m
5.15	CHAPS Restaurant Barbados Novices' Handicap Chase	2m4f110y

Wednesday 11 March

1.30	Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle	2m5f
2.05	RSA Chase	3m110y
2.40	Coral Cup (Handicap Hurdle)	2m5f
3.20	**Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase**	**2m**
4.0	Glenfarclas Handicap Chase (Cross Country Chase)	3m7f
4.40	Fred Winter Juvenile Handicap Hurdle	2m110y
5.15	Weatherbys Champion Bumper	2m110y

Thursday 12 March

1.30	JLT Novices' Chase (The Golden Miller Novices' Chase)	2m4f
2.05	Pertemps Network Final (Handicap Hurdle)	3m
2.40	Ryanair Chase (The Festival Trophy Chase)	2m5f
3.20	**Ladbrokes World Hurdle**	**3m**
4.0	Brown Advisory & Merriebelle Stable Plate (Handicap Chase)	2m5f
4.40	Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Challenge Cup Handicap Chase (Amateur Riders)	3m2f

Friday 13 March

1.30	JCB Triumph Hurdle	2m1f
2.05	Vincent O'Brien County Handicap Hurdle	2m1f
2.40	Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle (The Spa Novices' Hurdle)	3m
3.20	**Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase**	**3m2f110y**
4.0	St James's Place Foxhunter Chase Challenge Cup	3m2f110y
4.40	Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle	2m4f110y
5.15	Johnny Henderson Grand Annual Chase Challenge Cup	2m110y

Gold Cup pins

Nick Grant runs the rule over the possible runners in the Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup

BOBS WORTH

(Nicky Henderson)
Turned into a real wild card as we have seen so little of him since his 2013 triumph, and has had only four runs since finishing fifth last year. Disappointing in the Lexus at Christmas, but can be forgiven that and thrives at Cheltenham. **8**

BOSTON BOB

(Willie Mullins)
A couple of falls saw him briefly return to hurdling, but he bounced back to win at Aintree and Punchestown last year. Been tough for him recently, though, and appears held by a few others. **5**

CARLINGFORD LOUGH

(John Kiely)
From the Galway Plate to a leading contender for the blue riband. Ran a promising race in the Lexus and no surprise to see him win the Irish Hennessy. Tony McCoy was at his best there and has the ingredients for a huge run. **9**

CONEYGREE

(Mark Bradstock)
His jumping was superb in the Denman Chase, seems certain to see out the trip and is open to more improvement. **7**

DJAKADAM

(Willie Mullins)
Finally put it together in the Thyestes Chase, as he should have done from his handicap mark as a potential Gold Cup horse. Fell in the JLT last year when going well, but has his career in front of him at the tender age of six. **8**

FIRST LIEUTENANT

(Mouse Morris)
Has spent his racing career as a 'nearly' horse, not really gaining the rewards a horse of his talent deserved. Has been out of sorts this year, though, and his best days are probably behind him. **5**

LORD WINDERMERE

(Jim Culloty)
Last year's winner went off a 20-1 shot as he had not shown a lot in three prior runs. Harsh to say it was the same again, as two of his three runs this winter have been creditable. Suspicion he has been trained with this race in mind. **7**

MANY CLOUDS

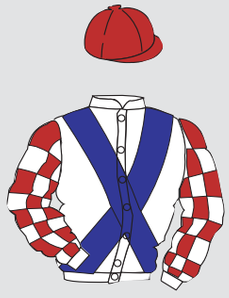
(Oliver Sherwood)
Brought down in the RSA last year, his reappearance at Carlisle worked out very well and he has gone on to win the Hennessy and the BetBright Cup Chase. Jumping is a strong point and he looks the right sort. **8**

ON HIS OWN

(Willie Mullins)
A surprise to see him finish second in last year's Cheltenham Gold Cup, when he could easily have got the race in the stewards' room. But judged on what he has done since, it would be an even bigger shock this time. **6**

ROAD TO RICHES

(Noel Meade)
Winner of the Galway Plate and only out of the frame twice in 10 starts over fences, he produced his best yet when winning the Lexus. Undoubtedly going the right way, he is sure to see it out up the hill. The one to beat. **10**



SAM WINNER

(Paul Nicholls)
Second string for his powerful yard but far from a forlorn hope on his third to Road To Riches at Leopardstown, where he was in front of Carlingford Lough. Has plenty of Cheltenham form and almost certain to run a good race. **7**

SILVINIACO CONTI

(Paul Nicholls)
Deserves favouritism, again arriving on the back of Betfair Chase and King George wins. Leading four out last year, but treading water up the hill. Probably the best horse in the race, but cannot be backed with real confidence. **7**

Lough holding McCoy's treble hopes

Day 4/Friday 13 March

YOU would not put it past Tony McCoy to make his last ride in the Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup a winning one on Carlingford Lough.

While McCoy's 20-year reign as champion jockey has been a quest for incredible numbers, he has won the blue riband event twice already – first on Mr Mulligan in 1997, when he was still fresh-faced, and then on the ill-fated Synchronised three years ago.

The second of those meant the world to McCoy as it came in the colours of JP McManus, and Synchronised's dam, Mayasta, was the first winner McCoy rode for his boss.

Carlingford Lough may not tug on McCoy's heartstrings as much, but the champion was quick to silence speculation he might ask McManus for special dispensation in his last year to ride Jonjo O'Neill's Holywell.

A Galway Plate winner when still a novice, he progressed to Grade One class last season and, bar a disappointing run in the RSA at the 2014 Festival, the John Kiely-trained nine-year-old has an otherwise persuasive profile. "He gave me a great feel winning the Irish Hennessy and I am very much looking forward to riding him in the Gold Cup," said McCoy.

"Gold Cup day is probably the most important day of the whole jumping year, and I am hoping he has a live chance.

"John Kiely has the horse in great shape, and he is definitely going there with a chance."

Last year's winner Lord Windermere is being dismissed by the bookmakers again, but with a perfect Cheltenham Festival record, he may reward each-way backers.

Trainer Jim Culloty will forever be remembered for partnering Best Mate to three wins in the Gold Cup, and he joined a select list of those to have ridden and trained a Gold Cup winner last season.

Culloty has made no secret of the fact Lord Windermere has been trained all year with one race in mind, but he showed a bit more dash in the Irish Hennessy last time out.

He said: "He is a hold-up horse, and at Leopardstown at Christmas the ground was bottomless, which he struggled with a bit, and the race just didn't work, but the horse came out of it well and I wasn't overly disappointed.

"Last time, we went into the race with different tactics – we wanted to be involved in the race a bit more. I think it was very encouraging and it's an open Gold Cup on a track where he comes alive, so all being well we're hoping for a good solid run, but to win again would be amazing."

Paul Nicholls had a stranglehold on the race when Kauto Star and Denman were

stickers' guide

Friday, 13 March, 3.20pm
Channel 4/At The Races

HOLYWELL

(Jonjo O'Neill)
Thrives in the spring and confidence among ante-post punters has been strong. An efficient rather than spectacular jumper, he slammed Don Cossack at Aintree last April and that looks top-class form on that horse's efforts since. **8**

HOME FARM

(Henry de Bromhead)
Listed scorer at Thurles in November, but every chance the Grand National at Aintree is his conditional aim this spring. **5**

HOUBLON DES OBEAUX

(Venetia Williams)
Ninth in the race last year, his form this term has been consistent with three second-placed finishes, but perhaps just short of what is required. **5**

SMAD PLACE

(Alan King)
Last season's RSA Chase runner-up is well regarded, but was thumped by Many Clouds when in receipt of weight at Cheltenham in January. Further improvement likely, but probably playing for place money. **7**

THE GIANT BOLSTER

(David Bridgwater)
Comes alive at Cheltenham and has a superb record in the Gold Cup. There would be worse each-way bets, but can he really improve on that in what could be a better race this year? **6**

NICK GRANT'S GOLD CUP VERDICT

Silviniaco Conti will rightly have his supporters, but there are nagging doubts that he can make it third-time lucky.

The three stand-out horses appear to be Many Clouds and the last two Galway Plate winners, Carlingford Lough and ROAD TO RICHES. Noel Meade's runner seems to have all the right credentials and is far from exposed. That also applies to Carlingford Lough, but the McCoy factor will play into his price. Bobs Worth is a huge price and appeals as the one for each-way backers.

1 ROAD TO RICHES
2 Carlingford Lough
3 Bobs Worth

in their pomp, and he is convinced favourite Silviniaco Conti can add to his two wins in the King George. There are doubters though, as he led over the last 12 months ago only to fade into fourth.

You can never write off Willie Mullins, and his contender Djakadam laughed at the handicapper when winning the prestigious Thyestes Chase. Bobs Worth won the race for Nicky Henderson two years ago and will also have plenty of supporters on that basis.

The JCB Triumph Hurdle is the mercy of Henderson, at least according to the bookies. He saddles the short-priced Peace And Co and unbeaten Top Notch in the same ownership, as well as Hargam for McManus and McCoy.

Further Grade One action comes in the Albert Bartlett with Mullins holding a strong hand, but do not be surprised if Dan Skelton – Nicholls' former assistant – opens his account at the meeting with the promising Value At Risk. Skelton wanted to avoid the meeting this year as he views him very much as a chaser, but he has been tempted to join the action.

Tony McCoy wins his first Gold Cup aboard Mr Mulligan in 1997

Nicholls' star is out to fill Festival gap

by Chris Wilson

AN underrated maestro or simply not as good at Cheltenham as anywhere else?

This is the conundrum facing punters on the final day of the Festival when Silviniaco Conti tries to make it third-time lucky in the Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup.

For many, the Paul Nicholls-trained nine-year-old has never received the recognition he has deserved over recent years.

After all, this is a horse who has claimed two King Georges, two Betfair Chases and a raft of other big-race victories in a decorated career. But he has never won over the masses.

The reason for that is pretty simple: Nicholls' inmate has never won at the Festival nor, for that matter, at Cheltenham.

His record in the Gold Cup is chequered at best. A faller two years ago when travelling with the sort of sang-froid control associated with champions, the copybook was further blotted in the great race 12 months ago.

Having gained a definitive lead four fences from home, Silviniaco Conti looked the winner. But then, suddenly and dramatically, it all went wrong.

Jockey Noel Fehily could do nothing as the chestnut gelding went awol, wandering across the track like a hapless punter chasing a winning betting slip caught in the breeze.

Within a handful of painful strides, momentum and initiative had gone as Lord Windermere charged clear late in the piece to win by a short head in one of the messiest Gold Cups for decades.

That Silviniaco Conti ended up fourth, admittedly beaten just under two lengths, is as remarkable now as it was then.

Nicholls, though, is unsurprisingly proud to keep faith in a horse who, Cheltenham aside, has filled the void left from Ditcheat's golden era of Denman, Kauto Star and Big Buck's.

"He's been unlucky at Cheltenham in the past," reasoned Nicholls. "He ran well when beaten in the International Hurdle and he was travelling when he fell in the Gold Cup two years ago.

"Last year he jumped the last in front, but he was just not finishing his races. So we sorted out his gastric ulcers and the cheekpieces have got him jumping sharper."

Whether Silviniaco Conti has been unfortunate at Cheltenham is a tenuous claim, but Nicholls is on the money when it comes to the horse's progress in the jumping department.

The five-times Grade One scorer fenced as if his hooves were filled with gold dust in the Betfair Chase at Haydock in November.

Indeed, the manner with which he grabbed the King George by the scruff of its neck on Boxing Day was a tell-tale sign of the confidence which now courses through his veins.

Be that as it may, Silviniaco Conti will never be as popular as Kauto Star, nor will he ever have the old-school Hollywood charm of Denman.

No matter. Nicholls is convinced where he will belong in the annals of jumps racing if redemption for previous trespasses is gained on March 13: "If Silviniaco Conti wins a Gold Cup he will cement himself as one of the best."

Trainer Paul Nicholls with Gold Cup hope Silviniaco Conti

FACT!

Only seven horses have won the Cheltenham Gold Cup more than once, the most recent being Kauto Star in 2007 and 2009 – the only horse to regain the Gold Cup. Bobs Worth will do the same if he repeats his 2013 triumph, but all stand a long way behind Golden Miller, who won five consecutive Gold Cups from 1932 to 1936.

I'M TALKING ABOUT THE HORSES STAN!
HURRICANE FLY WAS THE FIRST HORSE TO RECLAIM THE SJ CHAMPION HURDLE IN 38 YEARS IN 2013.
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Festival in focus

Festival betting guide: page 8

Day 2/Wednesday 11 March

WITH a couple of previous winners with a point to prove opposed by a fistful of younger guns, the Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase promises to be one of the most intriguing events of this year's Cheltenham Festival.

The two-mile championship has been lit up by some of the sport's most popular chasers over the years, going back to the likes of Fortria and Flyingbolt back in the 1960s.

Hilly Way struck gold twice in the 1970s, Badsworth Boy was a triple winner in the 1980s and Viking Flagship was a back-to-back hero in the 1990s, and who can forget Edredon Bleu's triumph under an inspired Tony McCoy in a pulsating climax in 2000?

Moscow Flyer, Azertyuiop and Well Chief fought many a memorable battle during a golden era in the division after the turn of the century, before Master Minded took over the mantle with successive wins in 2008 and 2009, yet many saw Sprinter Sacre's demolition job two years ago as the best of them all.

'The Black Aeroplane', as he became known, quickly earned superstar status, with an unbeaten run of 10 races over fences in less than 18 months encompassing a scarcely believable 19-length success in the 2013 Queen Mother.

Subsequent wins at Aintree and Punchestown later that spring left the impression he might never be beaten again, but that aura was smashed later in the year as Sprinter Sacre was pulled up at Kempton with a heart problem.

Sprinter is right back in running for Henderson

It was an awfully long road back for Nicky Henderson's nine-year-old, and when he did eventually make his highly-anticipated return in January's Clarence House Chase, he was beaten, with Dodging Bullets proving too strong from the last fence home.

Henderson was perfectly satisfied with the zest his pride and joy showed for much of the contest, and feels he will strip far fitter come March 11. He said: "He showed the old Sprinter was still there. It was great to see he was full of his enthusiasm, he travelled into the straight like himself and just got tired. Only one day matters, and he'll come on plenty for it."

It almost goes without saying that if the real Sprinter Sacre *(pictured above)* does turn up, the rest are playing for minor honours, but is it realistic to expect him to regain such brilliance after his issues? A more pertinent question is 'does he need to?' Probably not. It will be thrilling to find out.

Something similar applies to defending champion Sire De Grugy, the star of the two-mile chasing ranks last season in Spinter Sacre's absence. While his problems have certainly not being as significant as those suffered by Henderson's ace, Gary Moore's stable star has missed the bulk of this season after suffering a muscle issue in the autumn.

His jumping already left plenty to be desired before he eventually got rid of Jamie Moore in the Game Spirit Chase at Newbury a few weeks back – the race that led to McCoy's announcement that he was retiring.

Moore Snr took the brave call to turn out again at Chepstow a couple of weeks later though, and that decision paid rich dividends as Sire De Grugy got back on track by turning in a faultless round of jumping to claim a bloodless success, despite conceding upwards of 20lb.

It was hard not to be impressed with such a weight-carrying performance, and the trainer's confidence is now riding high once again.

He said: "If he gets the run of the race at Cheltenham, I think he'll be there with every chance, I really do."

Having already beaten the former winners, the Paul Nicholls-trained pair of Dodging Bullets and reformed improver Mr Mole certainly deserve their place in the field.

Both have been called plenty of names in the past, but should Sprinter Sacre and Sire De Grugy fail to run up to their best, the champion trainer, successful before with Call Equiname, Azertyuiop and Master Minded, may well be in the No.1 spot once more.

The Willie Mullins-trained dual Festival winner Champagne Fever and Shark Hanlon's pride and joy Hidden Cyclone are dangerous threats for the Irish.

The day starts with the Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle, won in such thrilling style 12 months ago by Mullins' Faugheen. The Closutton maestro has also been victorious with Fiveforthree and Mikael D'Haguenet, and heading this year's assault is Nichols Canyon. John Ferguson's Parlour Games appears the pick of the home runners.

Don Poli, another member of the all-conquering Mullins string, heads ante-post lists for the RSA Chase, although he faces a formidable challenge headed by David Pipe's Kings Palace.

Having dominated the race in its infancy, Enda Bolger will be bidding for a first win since 2009 in the Glenfarclas Cross County Chase.

Mullins saddles a strong team as he goes in search of a ninth Champion Bumper, while the Coral Cup and the Fred Winter Juvenile Hurdle are typically fiercely competitive handicaps.

Jessica's Jezki joy is the aim

by Ashley Iveson

JESSICA HARRINGTON'S burning desire for Cheltenham Festival glory remains as strong as ever as Jezki bids for back-to-back triumphs in the Stan James Champion Hurdle.

The 68-year-old has been training at Commonstown Stables in Moone, Co Kildare, since 1989, from where she has racked up eight Festival wins since finding the bullseye for the first with Space Trucker in the 1999 Grand Annual.

That is no mean total given her raiding teams can usually be counted on one hand, although three of those wins have been registered by just one horse, in legendary chaser Moscow Flyer.

A horse with god-like status in Kildare, 'Moscow' is famed for winning 19 times of his first 24 starts over fences, with his only defeats in that run coming when he either fell or parted company with Barry Geraghty.

Winner of the Arkle in 2002 and the Queen Mother Champion Chase 12 months later, 'Moscow' came to grief when defending his crown, but brought the house down in 2005 when he regained it.

Just the mention of his name brings a beaming smile to her face, and Harrington said: "Moscow was an amazing horse there, and I suppose the greatest satisfaction was when he went back and regained his crown at the age of 11. Everyone said he couldn't do it and he went back and did it.

"When you have a horse like that, you actually don't really appreciate them until you don't have them. Every time I entered him in a race, he went out and he won it, or got rid of Barry!"

Jezki, already a veteran of three Festivals, has a way to go until he can be mentioned in the same breath as Moscow Flyer, but another win in the greatest hurdling prize of all would give him a chance.

"If Jezki can win there again that would be amazing, but I refuse to compare him to Moscow. It's a different buzz and a different age," added the trainer.

The seven-year-old's first visit to Prestbury Park was fairly inauspicious as he finished eighth in the Champion Bumper behind Champagne Fever, but he fared better next time around by finishing third behind the same horse in the Supreme Novices' Hurdle.

He looked to have it all to do as he aimed to make it third time lucky 12 months ago with hurdling great Hurricane Fly and a couple of former Festival winners in The New One and the ill-fated Our Conor in opposition, but the application of a hood was a masterstroke, and Jezki powered up the hill for a momentous success.

"Cheltenham's a great place. Some horses just light up and really enjoy it and Jezki is one of them," said Harrington.

Reflecting on last year, she said: "I was happy he hadn't got lit up in the parade ring or the preliminaries. He jumped the first and took a bit of a tug and then everything unfolded. It was fantastic. I couldn't believe it. It was amazing.

"I've been lucky to have had a few winners at Cheltenham. I always think when you send one over there and it doesn't win you're disappointed, but then when it does happen you get that buzz again. It's a good excuse to celebrate, too!"

With Hurricane Fly having bettered Jezki three times on home soil this season, Harrington's ace will not be favourite to defend his title.

The Fly is in opposition once more, along with his exciting young stable companion Faugheen, with last year's luckless third The New One the main hope for the home team.

Harrington knows it will not be easy and is determined to enjoy the occasion win, lose or draw. She said: "If he wins a second we'll be looking for a third and a fourth. You're always looking to get better.

"If he wins, fantastic, but if he runs a good race and comes back in one piece I'll still be happy. I'll be disappointed initially, but afterwards I'll think 'he ran a good race, what more could I have done?'"

Jezki spearheads another small but select Harrington team heading across the Irish Sea, with elder half-brother Jetson not a complete no-hoper in the World Hurdle.

That pair could be joined by two or three stable companions in some of the lesser races, and Harrington insists none are going for the day out.

She said: "I'm not keen on taking horses over there unless I feel they can finish in the first four. I don't want to be going over there making up the numbers."

Jessica Harrington (inset below) watches Jezki at work at Commonstown Stables

FACT!

Should Sprinter Sacre or Sire De Grugy triumph in the Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase, they will become the 11th horse to double up in the two-mile feature joining Fortria (1960 and 1961), Drinny's Double (1967 and 1968), Royal Relief (1972 and 1974), Skymas (1976 and 1977), Hilly Way (1978 and 1979), Pearlyman (1987 andb1988), Barnbrook Again (1989 and 1990), Viking Flagship (1994 and 1995), Moscow Flyer (2003and 2005) and Master Minded (2008 and 2009).

SPEAKING OF THE CHAMPION HURDLE, THE 2012 WINNING JOCKEY WORE GREEN COLOURS. THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT!

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Festival in focus

Test your Cheltenham knowledge: page 8

Day 3/Thursday 12 March

Nicholls bids to repeat Big Buck's trick with Saphir

THE Ladbrokes World Hurdle is the centrepiece on the third day of the Festival, and this year's participants have plenty to live up to.

The three-mile showpiece has been won by some of the most popular names in National Hunt racing down the years, with Tommy Carmody's Galmoy a dual winner in 1980s and another Irish favourite, Dorans Pride, raising the roof with victory in the following decade.

The turn of the century, however, saw the bar raised to another level.

Baracouda brought Gallic flair to the party with back-to-back triumphs for Francois and Thierry Doumen in 2002 and 2003, before the lion-hearted Inglis Drever burst on to the scene a couple of years later.

Graham Wylie's pride and joy, a horse famed for hitting a flat spot in his races before turning on the afterburners up the hill, first clinched the prize formerly known as the Stayers' Hurdle in 2005, but was unable to defend his crown the following year due to injury.

However, he roared back to regain his title in 2007 before completing a hat-trick 12 months later.

As he returned to the hallowed winner's enclosure amid euphoric scenes, it would not have been difficult to argue we were witnessing the greatest staying hurdler of all.

After all, who could have predicted what was to come?

A couple of hours before Inglis Drever's historic victory, the Paul Nicholls-trained Big Buck's finished only seventh in the Jewson Novices' Handicap Chase, but a subsequent victory at Aintree sparked dreams of a potential Cheltenham Gold Cup bid.

Those claims were meant to be enhanced in the following season's Hennessy Gold Cup, but his unseating of Sam Thomas at the final fence would ignite one of the most memorable National Hunt tales.

Nicholls' decision to switch Big Buck's back to the smaller obstacles at Cheltenham on New Year's Day appeared a confidence-boosting exercise at the time, but in hindsight proved a masterstroke as the imposing gelding would go on to win 18 successive races over timber, featuring an incredible four straight victories under his perfect partner Ruby Walsh in the World Hurdle.

Big Buck's missed the following year, with Solwhit enjoying his day in the sun having been a bridesmaid behind Hurricane Fly so often.

Last year's renewal was billed as a match between the returning Big Buck's and unbeaten mare Annie Power, but Jonjo O'Neill's More Of That, who had also never lost, caused a minor upset by fighting off the Irish runner in a thrilling finish.

With Big Buck's retired after finishing an honourable fifth and Annie Power set to race against her own sex this time around, More Of That seemed an obvious candidate to become another multiple winner.

But nothing has gone to plan for More Of That this term, with an initial defeat prompting a breathing operation before a training setback ruled him out of the Festival.

That slightly clears the way for the master of Ditcheat to "do a Big Buck's" with another Andy Stewart-owned inmate in Saphir Du Rheu.

The grey failed to complete the course on two of his first three starts over fences, so he reverted to timber in the Cleeve Hurdle at Cheltenham last month and got the job done in determined fashion to book his ticket.

Nicholls *(left)* also saddles last year's fourth, Zarkandar, whose campaign has been built around a return to Prestbury Park.

Rock On Ruby, a former winner of the Champion Hurdle for Nicholls and now with Harry Fry, adds another fascinating dimension as he steps into the unknown over three miles.

The main supporting race is the Ryanair Chase, a relatively new addition to the Festival after being added a decade ago. Last year's winner Dynaste will have to watch on from the sidelines, as will 2013 victor Cue Card, but Irish hope Don Cossack adds a dash of star quality to the race.

Don Cossack is four from four so far this season for Gordon Elliott and carries the colours of Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary's Gigginstown House Stud.

The six-race card starts with the JLT Novices' Chase over two and a half miles, with Vautour and Ptit Zig the two at the head of the market. Vautour was a stunning winner of last season's Supreme Novices' Hurdle and following a Christmas blip, he got his career over fences back on track at Leopardstown in January.

With stable companion Un De Sceaux all the rage for the Arkle, Mullins has split his aces and this appears the best chance for Vautour to gain another Cheltenham success.

The Nicholls-trained Ptit Zig is a formidable challenger, although he has a slight question mark against him having fallen at Ascot, losing his unbeaten record over fences in the process. Apache Stronghold is another worth a mention in what could turn into a seriously competitive heat as novice chasers dodge Un De Sceaux.

Mob-handed Mullins plans big invasion

by Ashley Iveson

WILLIE MULLINS admits to a mixture of dread and excitement as he prepares to unleash a scarcely believable army of talent on the Festival.

It is 20 years since the master of Closutton first struck gold at Cheltenham, with Tourist Attraction a 25-1 winner of the Supreme Novices' Hurdle.

Despite being of esteemed National Hunt stock as a son of the legendary Paddy Mullins, trainer of Champion Hurdle and Gold Cup-winning mare Dawn Run, few could have guessed Willie would go on to become the all-time leading Irish trainer at the Festival with 33 wins so far.

It would be one of the biggest shocks in racing history should he not add to that tally this year, but Mullins is able to keep his feet on the ground.

He said: "You just hope you don't get a cough or cold in the yard and it's a nervous time, but it's a good nervousness.

"We're looking forward to it as much as we're dreading it. We're looking forward to one or two of the nice horses hopefully winning their races."

Indeed, if Mullins does not strike at least a couple of times on Tuesday's opening card, there are likely to be some long faces within the Mullins camp, in the Cheltenham betting ring and up and down the length and breadth of Ireland.

Douvan is all the rage for the opening Supreme Novices' Hurdle, while Un De Sceaux is odds-on across the board for the Arkle Trophy.

FACT!
Big Buck's made history in 2012 when becoming the first four-time winner of the Ladbrokes World Hurdle, following on from victories in 2009, 2010 and 2011, with Inglis Drever next best on three victories in 2005, 2007 and 2008.

Most trainers would be happy with two such horses over the whole week, but later that afternoon Mullins will then go to war with Faugheen and Hurricane Fly in the Champion Hurdle, before Annie Power goes in the OLBG Mares' Hurdle.

"We know they can't all win. I keep reading we have five favourites on the first day. Do five favourites win out of seven races? One or two might get through, we might have a treble if we're really lucky.

"The Supreme favourite normally gets turned over, that's Douvan, whose probably one of our hottest ones.

"It's what we're in the game for, though. To go to Cheltenham with as many as we can muster with a chance.

"As much as I dread it, it's lovely. That's the position we want to be in. This game is a game of disappointments more than anything. You need to enjoy the good ones when they come along."

> *It's what we're in the game for – to go to Cheltenham with as many as we can muster with a chance. As much as I dread it, it's lovely*
>
> ***– Willie Mullins***

Despite leaving Prestbury Park last March with four winners, Mullins admits there was a sense in the camp of what might have been.

He said: "Last year we had four winners and six seconds – three of them in photo finishes – and maybe a stewards enquiry or two that could have gone our way and didn't!

"We all re-grouped after and we were delighted to win the leading trainer award, but we were left wondering what it would have been liked if everything clicked – it could have been a hell of a year."

Mullins sends a jaw-dropping squad of around 50 horses across the Irish Sea, more horses than most trainers have in their yard, and he admits it is something of a logistical nightmare for his hard-working team.

He said: "It's definitely the strongest team we've ever had and I think we'll definitely have more numbers this year, although I'm not sure if that's a good thing. I'm just hoping it doesn't leave our line too thin for looking after all the horses that are going over there.

"It's going to be hard work for the people involved, and I don't get involved as I find if I do that it goes wrong!

"Two years ago I think we brought over a horse that wasn't running and another got left behind. Luckily enough it's a short ferry ride and short drive to Cheltenham!"

As Mullins prepares for the biggest week of the season, is the undoubted pressure that comes with saddling so many high-profile names and favourites keeping him awake at night? "I sleep all the time," he added. "That's the one good thing – I could sleep on a bed of nails!"

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Betting guide

Faugheen on course for flying start

by Sophie Bichener
stanjames.com

EVERYTHING is set to go for the StanJames.com Champion Hurdle on day one of the Cheltenham Festival.

Faugheen is hot favourite to beat stablemate Hurricane Fly at 11-10. He's been unbeaten in an impressive eight career starts – a stat that's been used to death. It's more important that Willie Mullins has said he's doing everything right on the way to the Festival, and he looks certain to be favourite come post time.

Nigel Twiston-Davies reckons there's nothing between The New One, 3-1 in the betting, and Faugheen. They have comparative form, if The New One maybe a little more substance over style, but connections don't share the pressure of being favourite on the day. He can be competitive if the ground turns out heavy, but will benefit from predicted good, good to soft ground.

Reigning champion Jezki is next best at 5-1. He would appreciate the likely relentless gallop, giving him something to aim at on the run up the hill. He's been beaten by his 11-year-old rival three times this season, but goes very well on the Spring ground and at Cheltenham.

Hurricane Fly bids to join the likes of Hatton's Grace, See You Then and Istabraq by winning the Champion Hurdle for the third time. If the ground is right, Mullins might not be far off by dubbing Hurricane Fly his 'each way bet of the week' at 8-1.

Arctic Fire was second to Hurricane Fly in the Irish Champion Hurdle in January and still has some to come according to Mullins. He's 14-1 and has been put up by various judges as the dark horse in this year's renewal.

Kitten Rock justified his shortening to 25-1 with an impressive performance in the Red Mills Trial Hurdle in the middle of last month. That was a fourth consecutive win for Edward O'Grady's five-year-old which sets him up nicely for The Festival. Whether he'll be up for the challenge of finding Faugheen and The New One out on the day though, remains to be seen.

Prices correct at time of writing and subject to fluctuation.

Stan James odds

StanJames.com Champion Hurdle	
Faugheen	11-10
The New One	3-1
Jezki	5-1
Hurricane Fly	8-1
Arctic Fire	14-1
Kitten Rock	25-1

Faugheen is in pole position to start the Cheltenham Festival in fine style for trainer Willie Mullins

Cheltenham Festival quiz

LAST YEAR

1 Name the only winner of the final day of last year's Festival to be trained in Britain.
2 Who rode the National Hunt Chase winner Midnight Prayer?
3 Western Warhorse won the Arkle for David Pipe – but what was his SP?
4 Who finished second to Faugheen in the Neptune?
5 How many times has Get Me Out Of Here been second at the Festival – and in which races?
6 Which 5lb conditional jockey won the Coral Cup?
7 Who was the first British-trained horse home in the Champion Bumper?
8 What was Tony McCoy's only winner at the Festival?
9 Name Davy Russell's three winners on the final day?
10 Which race did subsequent Paddy Power Gold Cup winner Caid Du Berlais run in?

21st CENTURY

11 Which horse beat future triple Gold Cup winner Best Mate in the Supreme Novices' Hurdle of 2000?
12 Who rode Hors La Loi III to win the 2002 Champion Hurdle?
13 Who rode Martin Pipe's Blowing Wind to win the Mildmay of Flete in 2002?
14 Which future Festival winners fought out the finish to the 2004 Supreme Novices' Hurdle?
15 Festival legend Inglis Drever was beaten by which horse on his first visit to the meeting in 2004?
16 Which Irish-trained horse won the first running of the Fred Winter for Nina Carberry?
17 Name the future Grand National winner to be a beaten favourite behind Trabolgan in the 2005 RSA Chase.
18 Which former Flat jockey rode Golden Cross to finish second in the 2006 World Hurdle?
19 Which horse won the World Hurdle in 2006 and the Arkle 12 months later?
20 Who trained 2007 Champion Hurdle winner Sublimity?

ANSWERS

1 Lac Fontana; **2** Mr Joshua Newman; **3** 33-1; **4** Ballyfaton; **5** Four – Supreme, Country Hurdle, Coral Cup twice; **6** Nico de Boinville (on Whisper); **7** Definitly Red (Steve Gollings); **8** Taquin Du Seuil; **9** Tiger Roll, Lord Windermere and Saveiio; **10** Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle; **11** Sausalito Bay; **12** Dean Gallagher; **13** Ruby Walsh; **14** Brave Inca (Champion Hurdle) and War Of Attrition (Gold Cup); **15** Fundamentalist (Royal & SunAlliance Novices' Hurdle); **16** Dabirun; **17** Comply Or Die (second); **18** Johnny Murtagh; **19** My Way De Solzen; **20** John Carr

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Saints Spotlight

from page 29

Jan 21 Manchester United 3 Saints 2 (Moran 3, 38)
Attendance: 40,371
McMenemy believed this encounter could of gone ''either way'' as Saints lost an entertaining encounter at Old Trafford.

Jan 23 Saints 0 Nottingham Forest 1
Attendance: 17,426
Saints failed to pick up their first win in five games.

Feb 4 Wolves 0 Saints 1 (Moran 63)
Attendance: 9.943
Moran's ferocious volley ensured returned to winning ways after a difficult January.

Feb 11 Saints 1 (Moran 61) Sunderland 1
Attendance: 16,698

Feb 21 Ipswich Town 0 Saints 3
(Worthington 10 Moran 33 Armstrong 36)
Attendance: 14,934

Feb 23 Saints 2 (Wright 32, Armstrong 44) Luton 1
Attendance: 14,934
Saints secured three more points thanks to Armstrong's headed winner.

First Division 1983/84 – after 28 games

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	29	17	8	4	47	20	59
Manchester United	29	15	10	4	54	31	55
Nottingham Forest	29	16	5	8	54	33	53
West Ham	29	15	5	9	46	31	50
SAINTS	**28**	**14**	**7**	**7**	**35**	**24**	**49**
QPR	28	14	4	10	45	26	46
Norwich City	29	11	9	9	34	32	42
Watford	29	12	5	12	56	54	41
Tottenham	29	11	8	10	46	45	41
Aston Villa	28	11	8	9	43	42	41
Luton Town	28	12	4	12	42	43	40
Coventry City	28	10	9	9	38	37	39
Arsenal	29	11	5	13	44	40	38
Everton	27	9	9	9	25	31	36
Birmingham City	28	9	6	13	28	33	33
Sunderland	28	8	9	11	28	39	33
Ipswich Town	28	9	5	14	36	40	32
Leicester City	28	8	8	12	44	49	32
WBA	28	9	5	14	31	46	32
Stoke City	29	7	8	14	27	49	29
Notts County	28	5	6	17	36	58	21
Wolves	28	4	7	17	22	58	19

Mar 3 Saints 2 (Armstrong 12 Puckett 82) Norwich 1
Attendance: 17,497

Mar 16 Saints 2 (Wallace 45,85) Liverpool
Attendance: 19,698
In the first ever televised league game at The Dell, a brace from Wallace saw Saints shock the leaders.

Mar 24 QPR 4 Saints 0
Attendance: 15,407

March 31 Everton 1 Saints 0
Attendance: 20,224
A second defeat on the spin for Saints was confirmed by an Andy Gray strike just before half-time. The early kick which was set up to avoid a clash with the Grand National.

April 7 Saints 2 (Wallace 51 Moran 87) Leicester 2
Attendance: 17,445
Saints twice came from behind to ensure a point at The Dell against mid-table Leicester City, slipping to fifth.

April 17 Saints 3 (Armstrong 46,79 Moran 80) Everton 1
Attendance: 16,978
Despite the good result, McMenemy could not label the win as ''revenge'' for his side's FA Cup semi-final defeat to the Toffees three days earlier.

April 21 Saints 2 (Holmes 33 Moran 76) West Ham 0
Attendance: 20,846

continued on facing page

KEEPER'S BALL: David Armstrong just fails to get to the loose ball against Birmingham City.

TOP SCORER: Steve Moran whips in a cross as Saints go on the attack against Aston Villa at Villa Park.

CROSSING IT IN: Arsenal's Brian Talbot can't prevent Nick Holmes getting his cross in at The Dell.

SPOT OF BOTHER: The arrow marks where Luton's David Moss fired his penalty against Saints at Kenilworth Road.

Saints who finished in the top

from page 29

Without a man of his stature in charge, I think Morgan Schneiderlin would have left in the summer.

The fans are behind him 100 per cent, the atmosphere down the ground is electric at the moment. If we get in the Champions League there might be a case for increasing the capacity because the place will go barmy. So we'll keep our fingers crossed.

You only have to look at the 'goals against' column to see that our defence is a strength. Jose Fonte is a leader. I think Liverpool signed the wrong centre-back, they made a dreadful decision because Jose is far better than Dejan Lovren.

As a former player and now fan I'm extremely happy and so is Jim Steele. We've decided that we'll go to the away games together if we get to the Champions League. Can you imagine going to places like Borussia Dortmund, the Bernabeu and the Nou Camp! It would be lovely to follow them around Europe.

We qualified for the UEFA Cup in 1984 but Mark McGhee of all people broke our hearts with a last-minute header to win it for Hamburg after a draw at The Dell.

St Mary's is becoming a fortress but The Dell was very different. Fortunately for us, no-one liked playing there.

I always got on well with the fans so didn't get a bad reception when I went back there with Birmingham City but it was always a hard place to go for an opposition player, the crowd were right on top of you and if they didn't like you they abused you.

I supplied the crosses for Danny Wallace when we beat Liverpool 2-0 at The Dell to go top of the league one Friday night. The Dell was a fortress, especially at night.

I didn't think Mick Mills was the greatest player but realised how wrong I was when I started playing with him. He is right up there with the best I've played with, a real leader of men. If he said something you listened.

And Lawrie McMenemy gave us a licence to thrill. We played with a back five but he'd encourage me and Millsy to get forward. He'd say "I've got the lanky Mark Wright oozing class at the back with Holmesy alongside him and Reuben Agboola quick as lightning as a sweeper."

Teams couldn't figure out how to play us. I remember Watford coming down and Graham Taylor moaning about the fact that his right-winger, Nigel Callaghan, ended up at full-back against me!

That left room for the magnificent Steve Williams, who would thread balls through for fun and David Armstrong and Steve Moran were 20-goals-a-season men. They were cream players. And then of course we had the best goalkeeper in the world in Peter Shilton.

Up front Frank Worthington could peel an orange with his left foot. Alan Curtis was a Welsh international but he was on the bench fighting to get in! Unbelievable.

Nick Holmes

I've been down a couple of times this season, I was impressed last year and the way things have moved on despite all the turmoil has been quite remarkable.

After losing the centre-back and left-back the number of clean sheets they have kept is quite amazing.

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Saints Spotlight

TRICKERY: Danny Wallace gets past Billy Bonds at West Ham

GOING CLOSE: Steve Moran in action at Everton.

GOAL: David Armstrong (hidden by the referee) scores during Saints' 3-1 Dell victory over Everton.

four back current crop's bid

The spirit of the side must be fantastic.

It reminds me of 1983/84. That was a team that on paper was weaker than previous Southampton teams.

We had lost many top quality stars in Kevin Keegan, Mick Channon and Alan Ball over the previous two years so what happened then is being repeated this year.

Peter Shilton was obviously a massive name, he was the best goalkeeper around at the time and we still had Stevie Williams and Frank Worthington.

But it wasn't our strongest team on paper.

Without a doubt, it was the spirit and belief we had that got us so far.

The biggest disappointment that year was the [FA Cup] semi-final defeat (Everton won 1-0 at Highbury) because we really felt we were going to win the Cup.

That was one of the unluckiest games I've played in. We deserved to win but Adrian Heath popped up with the winner in the 118th minute.

After that we vowed not to lose any of the remaining nine league games.

We won six and drew three and that was without Steve Williams, who didn't play after the semi-final.

We fully deserved to finished second in the league.

That season always stands out for me, it was a very special year.

Winning the Cup in '76 was obviously a massive thing for the club but finishing second was an even bigger achievement because it was over nine months.

We were only a win away from Liverpool.

continued on page 32

ON THE BALL: Mick Mills in action at Birmingham City.

from facing page

First Division 1983/84 – after 35 games

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	37	21	10	6	65	29	73
Manchester United	37	20	11	6	68	35	71
Nottingham Forest	37	19	7	11	66	41	64
QPR	37	19	6	12	58	31	63
SAINTS	**35**	**18**	**8**	**9**	**46**	**33**	**62**
West Ham	37	17	7	13	56	48	58
Tottenham	38	16	9	13	60	57	57
Arsenal	37	16	7	14	64	52	55
Aston Villa	38	15	9	14	54	56	54
Luton Town	38	14	8	16	50	58	50
Watford	37	14	7	16	62	69	49
Norwich City	36	12	12	12	44	40	48
Leicester City	38	12	12	14	62	62	48
Everton	36	12	12	12	34	39	48
Coventry City	38	12	10	16	51	61	46
Sunderland	37	11	12	14	37	48	45
Birmingham City	37	12	8	17	36	46	44
WBA	36	12	7	17	40	55	43
Stoke City	37	11	9	17	37	60	42
Ipswich Town	37	11	7	19	46	53	40
Notts County	36	9	9	18	44	63	36
Wolves	36	5	9	22	26	70	24

April 24 Watford 1 Saints 1 (Armstrong 68)
Attendance: 16,744
A slow start by Saints was rectified by a adequate second half display.

April 28 Saints 8 (Armstrong 28 Wallace 36,64, 85 Worthington 59 Moran 57, 76,82) Coventry 2
Attendance: 16.746
For the first time in two decades, two Saints scored hat-tricks as the club scored eight goals in a top flight game for the first time.
It was to be Wallace's first and only league hat-trick for the club as well as Worthington's last appearance in red and white.

May 5 Stoke 1 Saints 1 (Holmes 69)
Attendance: 12,131
Saints maintained fourth spot with a point against a Stoke City side battling relegation.

May 7 Saints 5 (Puckett 27, Wallace 39,67 Armstrong 73,79) Tottenham 0
Attendance: 21,141
Saints destroyed a weakened Spurs side, which had one eye on their UEFA Cup final first leg in midweek.

May 12 Birmingham City 0 Saints 0
Attendance: 16,455

May 14 WBA 0-2 Saints 2 (Puckett 71, Moran 72)
Attendance: 10,365
Two goals in two minutes ensured Saints maintained their hopes of finishing runners-up.

May 17 Notts County 1 Saints 3 (Moran 2,56 Armstrong 67)
Attendance: 6,035
Saints capped their best ever season in the First Division with victory at relegated Notts County in front of a spare crowd at Meadow Lane. The win lifted them into a second place finish.

First Division 1983/84 – final table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	42	22	14	6	73	32	80
SAINTS	**42**	**22**	**11**	**9**	**66**	**38**	**77**
Nottingham Forest	42	22	8	12	76	45	74
Manchester United	42	20	14	8	71	41	74
QPR	42	22	7	13	67	37	73
Arsenal	42	18	9	15	74	60	63
Everton	42	16	14	12	44	42	62
Tottenham	42	17	10	15	64	65	61
West Ham United	42	17	9	16	60	55	60
Aston Villa	42	17	9	16	59	61	60
Watford	42	16	9	17	68	77	57
Ipswich Town	42	15	8	19	55	57	53
Sunderland	42	13	13	16	42	53	52
Norwich City	42	12	15	15	48	49	51
Leicester City	42	13	12	17	65	68	51
Luton Town	42	14	9	19	53	66	51
WBA	42	14	9	19	48	62	51
Stoke City	42	13	11	18	44	63	50
Coventry City	42	13	11	18	57	77	50
Birmingham City	42	12	12	18	39	50	48
Notts County	42	10	11	21	50	72	41
Wolves	42	6	11	25	27	80	29

CONTACT THE SPORTS EDITOR ON 02380 424515

Saints Spotlight

Saints' view...

from page 31

Looking at the current group, the skipper is a real leader and seems to be the type who commands the respect of the players. I would think he would put right anyone who stepped out of line.

Nearly all of them are full internationals but there are no prima donnas, they all seem to get on with things to the best of their ability, without moaning if things don't go their way.

Goals are obviously a problem at the moment but the lad up front (Pelle) has proved he can score goals and I would think he'll start scoring again soon, but others have to as well.

I'm the same as every other Southampton fan, I really hope they make the top four because the rewards for getting in the Champions League are unbelievable now.

David Armstrong

The pitches they play on are far better than those we played on but the way they play is very pleasing to the eye.

They play the way I was brought up to play at Middlesbrough.

They're a breath of fresh air. The

biggest question for me last year was how they would react when they were expected to win, it's always harder to lead than it is to be in the chasing pack.

The question once again is whether they can handle the pressure at the top.

It makes you appreciate how well we did to finish second.

For a provincial club, which is what Southampton were at the time, that was a great achievement.

We played with the full-backs pushing on and three at the back but we also had three up front, so not that different to Saints today, with Danny Wallace wide and Steve Moran alongside Frank Worthington.

I don't see why Southampton's success this year can't be sustained, they're more than capable of holding their own and have a great chance.

The attitude's right, the squad's strong and they've learnt from the bubble bursting last season.

Steve Williams

We did the double over Liverpool (editor's note, they didn't) and only finished three points behind them which was incredible,

TALKING POINTS

THE big talking points of the 1983/84 season.

6 June 1983: Portsmouth, newly promoted to Division 2 after winning the third tier title, splash out a club record £180,000 for Coventry City's 21-year-old striker Mark Hateley.

4 August 1983: Chelsea, who only just avoided relegation to Division 3 in 1982/83, pay Reading £175,000 for 21-year-old striker Kerry Dixon.

23 September 1983: Newcastle United, with ex-Saint Kevin Keegan boosting their Division 2 promotion push, sign Peter Beardsley, who was rejected by Manchester United the previous season, in a £150,000 deal from Vancouver Whitecaps.

20 October 1983: Coventry City sign 21-year-old full-back Stuart Pearce from Alliance Premier League side Wealdstone.

30 October 1983: Strikers Tony Woodcock and Ian Rush each score five times as Arsenal and Liverpool crush Aston Villa and Luton Town respectively.

16 November 1983: Bobby Robson's England fail to qualify for the European Championships despite a 4–0 away win over Luxembourg in their final qualifying game, as Denmark win 2–0 in Greece to top the group.

26 November 1983: Kenny Dalglish scores his 100th competitive goal for Liverpool in a 1-1 league draw against Ipswich Town.

10 December 1983: Coventry City stun defending league champions Liverpool 4–0 at Highfield Road, striker Terry Gibson hitting a hat-trick.

16 December 1983: Terry Neill is sacked after more than seven years as manager of Arsenal, who occupy 16th place in the First Division.

7 January 1984: Harry Redknapp's AFC Bournemouth pull off one of the biggest FA Cup upsets of all time with a 2–0 win over holders Manchester United in the third round.

29 January 1984: Brighton & Hove Albion knock Liverpool out of the FA Cup for the second season running, while a last minute Steve Moran goal gives Saints a famous derby win at Portsmouth.

14 March 1984: FA Cup surprise package Plymouth Argyle book a semi-final place by beating Derby County 1–0 in the quarter-final replay at the Baseball Ground.

20 March 1984: Saints become the fourth team to reach the FA Cup semi-finals, thrashing Sheffield Wednesday 5-1 in a quarter-final replay at The Dell

21 March 1984: Oxford United, heading for promotion glory under Jim Smith in the Third Division, sign prolific Newport County striker John Aldridge for £78,000.

25 March 1984: Liverpool and Everton draw 0–0 in the first all-Merseyside Football League Cup final.

UPSET: Cherries players in the bath after beating holders Manchester United in the FA Cup.

28 March 1984: Liverpool win an unprecedented fourth successive Football League Cup by beating Everton 1–0 in the replay at Maine Road, Graeme Souness scoring.

14 April 1984: Everton defeat Saints 1–0 at Highbury in the FA Cup semi-finals to reach their first final for 16 years, while Watford reach the FA Cup final for the first time ever with a 1–0 win over Plymouth at Villa Park.

28 April 1984: Saints claim the biggest win of the First Division season with an 8-2 thrashing of Coventry City, with Danny Wallace and Steve Moran both scoring hat-tricks.

7 May 1984: Manchester United's 2-1 defeat by Ipswich Town and Liverpool's 5–0 win over Coventry City give the Anfield club a five-point lead in the First Division with two games left.

ALL TODAY'S RESULTS - SEE PAGE 46

Saints Spotlight

OF TOP SEASON

GREAT MEMORIES: Danny Wallace celebrates one of his three goals against Coventry in April 1984.

STAR MAN: Mick Mills in action for Saints.

9 May 1984: Tottenham Hotspur draw 1–1 with Anderlecht in the first leg of the UEFA Cup Final in Brussels.

10 May 1984: Ray Wilkins accepts an offer to join AC Milan from Manchester United in a £1.5 million deal.

12 May 1984: Liverpool claim their third successive league title after drawing 0-0 with Notts County. Birmingham City go down as they draw their final match 0-0 with Saints. Kevin Keegan's Newcastle United are promoted to the First Division behind champions Chelsea, and Sheffield Wednesday. Keegan then announces his retirement from playing at the age of 33.

16 May 1984: Nottingham Forest beat Manchester United 2-0 to leapfrog their opponents in second place in the First Division on goal difference.

17 May 1984: In the last match of the First Division season, Saints beat Notts County 3-1 to finish in second place – the highest finish in their history - while Nottingham Forest, Manchester United and QPR complete the top five and qualify for the UEFA Cup.

19 May 1984: Everton win their first major trophy in 14 years by defeating Watford 2–0 in the FA Cup final with goals from Graeme Sharp and Andy Gray.

21 May 1984: PFA Young Player of the Year Paul Walsh joins Liverpool from Luton Town for £700,000 as manager Joe Fagan lines him up as a potential long-term successor to the 33-year-old Kenny Dalglish.

23 May 1984: Tottenham Hotspur draw 1–1 with Anderlecht in the UEFA Cup final second leg at White Hart Lane, and win 4-3 on penalties to lift the trophy.

30 May 1984: Liverpool lift the European Cup, beating A.S. Roma 4-2 on penalties after a 1–1 draw in Rome. They become the first English team to win three major competitions in the same season.

31 May 1984: Keith Burkinshaw resigns after eight years as manager of Tottenham owing to a dispute with the club's board. He is succeeded by Peter Shreeves.

10 June 1984: John Barnes scores a spectacular goal for England in their 2–0 away win over Brazil in a friendly. After Luther Blissett and Mark Chamberlain 18 months previously, he becomes only the third black player to score for the full England team. Pompey striker Mark Hateley had earlier netted the opener.

12 June 1984: Liverpool midfielder Graeme Souness departs for Italian club Sampdoria in a £650,000 deal.

28 June 1984: AC Milan sign Mark Hateley for £915,000.

Saints' view...

from facing page

especially as our centre-forward, Frank Worthington, scored so few goals.

That was unusual for a Southampton side but Steve Moran had another good season and Nick Holmes and David Armstrong took up the slack from midfield.

We had a brilliant young player in Mark Wright as one of three at the back and pushed Mark Dennis and Mick Mills on into midfield to help me out because David Armstrong loved to get forward.

It was a different system for the time, not unlike what many teams play today, and a lot of sides couldn't handle it.

Lawrie introduced it because it suited the players he had.

And of course we had a brilliant goalkeeper. Peter Shilton was exceptional and made many match-winning saves.

Like all the clubs then, we only had a squad of 14-15 players so you played every game, which is why every effort was made for me to play against Everton in the FA Cup semi-final at Highbury.

Arsenal was my club as a boy [Williams would join the Gunners in December 1984] so I was desperate to play.

I'd done my cartilage in the quarter-final win against Sheffield Wednesday – in a challenge from Mel Sterland - but we were 90 minutes from the FA Cup final so I wasn't going to miss it.

Watford and Plymouth were the other semi-finalists so we had a great chance of winning the Cup.

Because we had such a small squad there weren't any obvious replacements for me so they gave me an injection, which was experimental at the time and a real gamble.

It didn't come off, I was up against Peter Reid who was a good old pro.

But I'd have done much better against him had I been fully fit.

I just didn't have the 'feel' in my right foot.

Some say I shouldn't have played but there was no-one else and it was such a big game so I don't regret it.

We could easily have won as David Armstrong and Danny Wallace both missed sitters.

I had the operation straight afterwards and didn't play again that season. But we still qualified for Europe.

What Lawrie achieved with Southampton was stunning, he's not far off Cloughy for what he did for the club.

This season has also been a pleasant surprise.

Like everyone else, I thought they sold a few too many in the summer but they've got a 50-50 chance of reaching the Champions League.

Hopefully they and Arsenal will get there. I think they both can.

Southampton FA Senior Cup semi-finals .... special report

SOUTHAMPTON Solent University sports journalism student Terry Mayers has spent the past week on work experience at the Southern Daily Echo.

We sent him along to cover both the Southampton Senior Cup semi-finals.

This is how he got on ...

A tale of two semi-finals

LONELY FIGURE: Stoneham's Luke Musselwhite

WEDNESDAY

As I left the cattle herd otherwise advertised as the 17:44 South West Trains service to Portsmouth and Southsea, I took in the fresh spring-like air at the deserted Hamble railway station with a sense of excitement and trepidation.

The previous night's efforts to cover the scheduled first semi-final of the Senior Cup at Sholing FC had ended in disappointment due to my inability to check social media and the untrustworthy British weather ending in the match being postponed for 48 hours.

Making my way to the ground about half a mile walk from Hamble railway station, I crossed every possible finger in the hope I would see some football this time.

Upon my arrival past the famous Folland aircraft statue which gives the GE Social Club a sense of nostalgia, the vision of working floodlights left me with the same sense of relief a child gets when he completes his first day at a new school.

Mingling with the fans before the action got underway, the general consensus was that Wessex League side Team Solent were expected to advance to the hallowed turf of St Mary's for the final on March 29.

On the menu: Coffee/Tea £1, Soft Drinks 80p, Alcohol: N/A

Admission: Adults £3, Concessions £2

Atmosphere

Not quite the carnival of football, but a family feel about the place with all age groups being represented. It left me re-assured that grass roots football has a thankfully long way to go before it dies a death.

Match Report

Team Solent duly beat Stoneham 3-0 in an ill-tempered affair .

Goals from Ollie Goodard, Jemal Frederik and Jim Orvis ensured Solent will be playing in the final.

Solent dominated the early proceedings and went ahead when Sam Byles, who was proving a handful for the Stoneham defence, won a free kick just outside the box.

Byles' delivery allowed defender Ollie Goddard to head home, giving Solent a deserved lead.

Stoneham captain James Cole tried to encourage his team's urgency but striker Luke Musslewhite cut a lonely figure in their attack for the majority of the first half.

After the break Stoneham looked to get back into proceedings with Callum Pragnell twice going through the defence only to fire his efforts straight at Tommy Taylor in the Solent goal.

Stoneham's brief dominance was abruptly ended when Byles once again won a free kick on the edge of the box when he was brought down by defender Sean Stacey.

Byles' pinpoint delivery allowed Jemal Frederik to rise above the Stoneham defence, heading home Solent's second.

The tie then descended into an ill-tempered affair with challenges from both teams bringing complaints from opposite players.

A meaty challenge by Stacey again on Solent's Jesse Waller-Lassen prompted a booking from referee Derek Pratt as the tie began to descend into a messy affair.

Stoneham had some chance before the game ceased but never really troubled the Solent goal before Jim Orvis converted a close range effort to round off a good night for Team Solent.

Managers' views

Despite the defeat, Stoneham boss Adam Pullinger was not discouraged with his side's performance.

"Team Solent are a league above us, a division we are trying to get promoted too, and we were undone at set pieces.

"They did not better us with their football.

"We have been to the Southampton Senior Cup final before and although it's disappointing to not be playing at St Mary's again, we can take many positives from the game."

Solent chief Joe Taylor believed his team didn't get out of second gear, despite encouraging performances from his two frontmen.

"We didn't play but we are into the final which is the main thing.

"Jemal and Sam had very good games."

THURSDAY

After my disastrous attempt to see this tie just 48 hours earlier, I could tonight cross the Itchen Bridge rich in the knowledge that I will be seeing the second Southampton Senior Cup semi final.

Making a note of the teams on my complimentary programme (the perks of being a writer!) I sensed that I was tonight attending a bona-fide cup tie.

Although on paper the Hamble first team were expected to walk through their second team some two leagues below, many of the murmurings before kick-off pointed to this being anything but straight forward.

"No room for complacency tonight, or things could get tricky," waas the consent amongst the fans as a mingled before kick-off.

Atmosphere

The Silverlake Arena is an impressive non league facility but it has not lost the feel of an interactive community club.

The clubhouse located directly next to the changing rooms is a buzzing hub where home and away fans alike congregate.

Despite the ground possessing two more then comfortable stands (I am speaking from experience here) most of the fans tend to assemble behind the goals and on the flanks of the pitch.

Much like the previous night's semi-final, all corners of society where represented with young, old, male and female in attendance.

On the menu: Tea: £1, Coffee: £1, Soup: £1, Bottle of Beer: £2.80 Pint: £3.10

Admission: £3 Adults, £2 Concessions

Match Report

Hamble progressed to face Team Solent in the Senior Cup final after advancing past their reserve side wuth a flattering 4-1 result at the Silverlake Arena.

A penalty from Daniel Cox before goals from James Thomson, Shane Flooks and a 35-yard wonder strike from defender Craig Shrimpton ensured there place in the final.

Hamble Club Reserves, however, put up a fantastic fight and were unlucky to find themselves 2-0 down at the break.

A brief revival in the second half after a sloppy start from the Hamble Club allowed Costa Mendis to pull a goal back and create a sense of anxiety amongst the Hamble Club supporters and playing staff.

Hamble Club seemingly had their backs against the wall after conceding but a bizarre incident involving tMendis changed the rhythm of the game.

With his team on top and looking to gain a equaliser to bring the game into extra time, Mendis appeared to go down softly under a challenge just outside the oppositions box.

Seemingly happy that he had won a free kick in a dangerous position, Mendis then grinned at the ref in a apparent confession to diving which earned himself a booking and allowed Hamble Club off the hook.

From that moment, the momentum of the game changed and Hamble were able to get to grips with the side some two leagues below them.

A fantastic solo effort from Thomson gave the Hamble Club clear breathing space before a goal of the season contender from Craig Shrimpton booked Hamble's place at St Mary's.

Managers' views

Hamble manager Scott Marchant acknowledged his team had been in a real fight

"To be honest, they played the better football and gave us a real scare in the second half," he admitted.

Looking towards the final, Marchant admitted his side were up against it when they play Team Solent.

"They have great players and fantastic facilities. It will be a tough , tough game – but you never know in football."

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Girls U13s get set for cup clash

SOUTHAMPTON Saints Girls under-13 team are celebrating after reaching the Hampshire FA under-14 Cup.

They face Portsmouth under-14s at the Basingstoke-based Winklebury complex next Saturday, March 14, at 1pm.

The team are unbeaten in the Winchester and District Cup for three years, and are are the current league champions.

The girls won a national title in 2013 and ended last season with back to back victories in major tournaments in the Reading area.

The squad now want to test their skills against international competition and have entered a tournament in Holland where they hope to compete against some of the best teams in Europe.

This comes at a cost of over £2,600, which has to be found either from parents and fund-raising events.

Anybody wishing to sponsor the girls can contact manager Dave Jenman at holly@jenman1745.freeserve.co.uk

Narrow win for Saints in Cobblers tie

Northampton Town U18s 0
Southampton Saints U18s 1

THIS game was played at Wallingford FC as it is roughly halfway between the two teams.

Northampton, who are part of the town's professional football club, looked resplendent in their yellow away kit.

Saints, who receive no financial backing from Southampton FC, looked equally good in their all-red kit sponsored by Sydenhams.

The Cobblers had the best of the first half, Saints' 'keeper Millie Peake making a string of saves.

At the other end Paris Payne was always a threat with her pace, and on the right Rebecca Collins forced a brilliant save from the 'keeper.

Saints were awarded a penalty but Elle Pearce's kick was straight at the 'keeper.

Saints looked more compact in the second half with an excellent back four of Caitlan Davison, Martha Phillips, Kayleigh Tonks, and Izzy Glover, with Tiff Eley sitting in front of them.

Saints had the upper hand, and it was no surprise when they took the lead, Collins crossing low from the by-line for Payne to score.

Bandwagon rolls on as U12s win

Saints U12s 7 Wyvern U13s 1

SAINTS U12s bandwagon rolled on with a comfortable over an ever improving Wyvern team.

The spree started early on with Olivia Norton following up a parried shot to tap in the opening goal.

The second goal came from Grace Griffiths' shot from the edge of the area.

Griffiths crossed for Charlotte Webb to tap in at the back post and Larissa White continued her rich vein of scoring to make it 4-0 at half time.

Three more goals were added in the second half fromWhite, Webb and Norton.

Wyvern continued to work hard and did grab a breakaway goal.

Two hat-tricks and six braces from four quarter-finals

THERE were a staggering 31 goals in the four D.R.Ryder Trophy quarter-finals – including two hat-tricks and six braces.

Boyatt Wood Wanderers advanced into the last four with a thrilling 4-3 victory at home to Testlands.

The hosts were leading 2-1 at half time, but trailing 3-2 with just five minutes remaining thanks to goals from Tom Smith and a Jordan Cook double

However, a double each from Charlie Ford and Warren Applegate gave Wanderers an unlikely victory.

Titans eased to a 9-1 victory at Chartwell Gree, Sam Martin leading the rout with a hat-trick.

Sam Bessant and Ranjan Pusparas both netted twice with Connor Bray and Nick Chalk completing the rout. Lee Bore netted a consolation.

Craig Lyons struck a hat-trick as Hamble Roll Call Reserves beat Hedge End Athletic 6-3.

With the score 3-3 at the interval, Craig Lyons (3), Russell Medcalf, Sean Tollervey and Patrick Goode saw Hamble progress.

The final side to advance to the semi finals are Ice House following their 4-1 win at R.S. Ocean Village.

Louis Cassam netted for the hosts in the first half along with Ted Aplin as the sides went into the break level at 1-1.

Second half goals from Gary Gotts and Kev Field (2) sent Ice into the last four.

Seven-goal thriller

There was a seven goal thriller in the only Tempo Travel City of Southampton Junior Division One game.

Kieran Palmer grabbed a hat-trick as Sky Blues edged out fellow mid-table side A.F.C. Riverside 4-3.

Brad Snelling also netted with Ted Aplin, Luke Living and Stuart Griffiths replying.

In Division Three, Bishops moved three points clear of rock bottom Chartwell Green Reserves after beating them 4-1.

First half goals from Scott Shephard and Louis Dutfield gave them a 2-1 half time lead, and second half strikes from Max Beebe and Paul Tanner completed the scoring.

There were two shock results in Division 4, as second from bottom Royal Marine won 1-0 at third placed Durley, Gift Ngubane scoring in the second half.

Even more surprisingly, Otter Sunday picked up their first win of the season, beating King George 5-3 at home.

With the scores level at 1-1 at half time, goals from Lewis Turnball (2), Steve Taylor, Ben Harris and Mike Harris ended a torrid run of just one point from their opening 12 games.

Matt Smith, Abraham Kapinga and David North replied.

Chris Dack scored twice as Burridge A.F.C moved up to fifth in Division 5 with a 4-2 victory over St Minions.

Richard Becheley and Alex Juden also netted with Chris Lee and Martin Ellis replying for second bottom St Minions.

Dorchester Arms extended their lead at the top to seven points after a superb comeback to beat Bitterne Ducks 3-2.

Chris Pye and Michael Thomas gave the visitors a 2-0 lead at half time, but a second half rally from Dorchester brought goals from Joe Clist, Aaron Heskins and Kieran Hine.

Southampton Seahawks' miserable season continued with a 4-0 loss to Portswood U United.

They have now lost all 13 games this season, conceding 77 goals in the process.

Matt Giles opened the scoring in the first half, and goals from Jimi John and a Joe Harman brace rounded off Portswood's win.

In Division Six, Mottisfont extended their perfect start to 13 games .

They hammered third placed Netley Royals 7-0 with goals from Matt Bosenquet (4), Jason Gradidge, Ross Man and Sam Piper.

Lyndhurst J.F.C. romped to a 9-2 victory at A.F.C Carnival in Junior Division 7. Goals came from Lee Strickland (3), James Green (2), Kieran Edwards (2), Ali Pugi and Adam Brett.

AFC Waterside extended their lead at the top to six points as they hammered Chamberlayne Athletic Reserves 11-0.

Michael Baker netted four times with Sean Parker (2), Shane Lamb, Josh Munroe, Tom Minihan, Damo Davies and Damo Craven completed the spree.

TEMPO CITY OF SOUTHAMPTON SUNDAY LEAGUE

Senior Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.F.C. Bursledon	9	7	1	1	45	11	22
K.R.L.	11	7	0	4	47	22	21
Hamble Roll Call	7	7	0	0	29	6	21
A.F.C. West End	10	6	1	3	28	11	19
Sholing United	8	5	0	3	40	21	15
Yacht Tavern	10	4	0	6	22	27	12
Cricketers Arms	11	3	0	8	27	42	9
Bush Hill & NH	5	2	0	3	13	19	6
Aldermoor United	13	0	0	13	9	101	0

Junior 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ice House	11	9	0	2	49	28	27
Glen	15	9	0	6	57	41	27
Landguard Rovers	13	7	1	5	49	38	22
Titans	10	6	2	2	31	15	20
A.F.C. Riverside	13	6	1	6	26	28	19
Sky Blues	14	5	1	8	35	55	16
Chamberlayne	15	4	3	8	35	37	15
A.F.C. Portswood	9	4	1	4	26	39	13
R.S. Ocean Village	9	2	1	6	22	31	7
Chartwell Green	9	1	2	6	17	35	5

Junior 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S & D Youth	14	8	1	5	46	44	25
Itchen Saints	9	7	2	0	48	14	23
Hamble Roll Call	11	7	2	2	36	16	23
Testlands	9	7	0	2	37	12	21
Lok Eastleigh	10	3	3	4	23	26	12
Pheonix A.F.C.	10	4	0	6	17	34	12
Boyatt Wood	6	3	1	2	16	16	10
L.H. Galaxy	13	1	3	9	17	39	6
Athletico Tin Hut	10	0	0	10	12	51	0

Junior 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hedge End Athletic	11	11	0	0	85	15	33
Trant	12	10	0	2	65	14	30
Test Valley Sp	11	6	1	4	29	34	19
Bishops	8	4	0	4	22	30	12
A.F.C. Bishopstoke	11	3	3	5	21	33	12
A.F.C. Velmore	8	3	1	4	22	24	10
Young Boys 93/4	9	3	0	6	26	44	9
Fleming Sports	13	2	2	9	26	56	8
Chartwell Green	13	2	1	10	16	62	7

Junior 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marchwood	15	9	1	5	47	34	28
A.F.C. Southbrook	11	8	0	3	53	23	24
Durley	13	6	3	4	34	23	21
Shelfside	12	6	2	4	51	41	20
Eastpoint	12	6	1	5	37	41	19
Royale Marine	12	5	2	5	24	25	17
Carnival U.K.	11	5	1	5	44	39	16
King George	10	5	1	4	31	26	16
Holbury United	15	5	0	10	42	58	15
Otter Sunday	13	1	1	11	17	70	4

Junior 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dorchester Arms	13	11	1	1	67	14	34
Sholing Monks	10	8	0	2	38	15	24
Curbridge	10	7	2	1	40	9	23
Portswood United	15	6	4	5	43	30	22
Bitterne Ducks	11	6	1	4	42	25	19
Burridge A.F.C.	10	4	2	4	29	25	14
Itchen Albion	10	4	0	6	23	36	12
Portside	8	3	0	5	16	15	9
St. Minions	10	1	0	9	16	75	3
Soton SeaHawks	13	0	0	13	7	77	0

Junior 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mottisfont	13	13	0	0	92	10	39
Hunters Inn	15	12	0	3	63	13	36
Netley Royals	15	10	2	3	45	36	32
Fawley R.B.L.	12	9	1	2	58	26	28
A.F.C. Spitfire	12	4	2	6	31	38	14
J.S.C.	13	4	0	9	24	34	12
Sporting Compass	11	3	2	6	22	45	11
Unity	12	2	1	9	16	52	7
A.F.C. Phoenix	11	1	1	9	16	56	4
Bannister Park	14	1	1	12	13	70	4

Junior 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.F.C. Waterside	12	11	1	0	95	5	34
Portswood Res.	13	9	1	3	64	25	28
Dorchester Manor	11	8	0	3	40	23	24
Bishopstoke Res.	8	5	1	2	33	19	16
Woodside A.F.C.	13	4	2	7	26	53	14
Lyndhurst Junior	7	4	1	2	35	12	13
A.F.C. Carnival	14	1	3	10	21	82	6
Chamberlayne Res	11	1	2	8	16	75	5
Testwood Torn	11	0	3	8	20	56	3

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Colleges football round-up

BARTON Peveril have given their Peter Munro Cup final prospects a timely boost by beating Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges League rivals Sparsholt 4-3.

But Andover, who they meet in the final at Southampton Solent University's Test Park stadium on Wednesday week, March 18, crashed 5-1 at Peter Symonds, ***writes MIKE VIMPANY.***

BP bounced back from an untimely 3-2 title defeat by Itchen to take a two-goal lead against Sparsholt.

Ben Gurman, working his way back to peak fitness after hamstring problems, got both the goals, the first from a penalty and the second with a header.

But Sparsholt hit back hard, scoring three times to leave BP 3-2 in arrears.

Barton Peveril refused to lie down and goals by Rian Jima-Otero and skipper Jack Pearson, with a 20-yard free kick, gave them a 4-3 win.

Andover were looking for a pre-cup final win tonic themselves – but it certainly didn't happen at Peter Symonds, where they found themselves chasing the game from the off.

Theo Servini gave PSC rhe perfect start, which Ollie Lerwell improved soon after.

Andover looked distinctly vulnerable at the back, but always looked capable of scoring themselves as Cameron Roach saw one effort cleared off the line and then hit the bar.

In between times, though, Symonds got a third as Servini carved out an opening for the ever dangerous Callum Doyle to make it 3-0 at the break.

As the PSC goal tally mounted up, so Andover became increasingly argumentative – both amongst themselves and the referee, who brandished a red card soon after half-time, reducing the visitors to ten men.

Andover did manage to pull one goal back, but fourth and fifth strikes by Joel Drew and Jamie Howells gave PSC an emphatic 5-1 win.

ANDOVER CRASH AT PETER SYMONDS

ABOVE: Peter Symonds try to play out of midfield against Peter Symonds.

RIGHT: Cameron Roach (right) on the ball

Champions designate Itchen thrashed St Vincent 12-0, while Alton continued their up-table climb with a 5-2 win over Portsmouth in which Harry Schorah scored a hat-trick. Richard Dane and Tom Pate added to the score.

Queen Mary's and Chichester shared the spoils 3-3 and, like Poole Grammar and Bournemouth who drew their derby 2-2, shared the spoils.

Tom Fisk was first to score, rekindling memories of his elder brother Jordan's prowess in front of goal in his Poole Grammar days.

Jordan, affectionately nicknamed 'teen ace' in his days at PGS, now plays Wessex League soccer for Verwood Town.

It looked like strikes by Jordan Osborne and Matt Livingstone might win it for Bournemouth, but fleet-a-foot Alex Martin equalised late on to make it 2-2.

Totton scored four times in the first half, but were pinned back as Bournemouth & Poole mounted a gallant comeback.

Arya Farshad struck a sweet half volley after a tremendous diagonal ball from Connor Swyer and one minute later Oscar Bircham scored the goal of the game with a rocket into the top corner from 30 yards out.

"With 30 minutes to go it was game on," said Sholing goalkeeper Matt Brown, who coaches the B & P side.

But Totton weathered the storm and bagged a fifth goal with 5 minutes to go to secure a 5-2 win.

Trio's goals lead to cup final

HENRY Beaufort are through to the Hampshire Schools FA Under-15 Cup final against either Salesian or Brookfield after a 4-1 semi-final win over Cams Hill.

The Winchester youngsters made a dream start, pouncing on early hesitancy in the Cams defence to take an early lead through the lively IK Hill.

But they were indebted to goalkeeper Callum Hossick, who made a series of flying saves to keep the Henry Beaufort noes in front.

Twice he denied Jake Harvey and then the tricky Miles Gibson before Cams Hill deservedly equalised when he Beaufort defence failed to clear a corner and Harvey made it 1-1.

The turning point of the tie came early in the second half when Hill restored the Henry Beaufort lead with a goal Cams felt should not have stood.

With both teams wearing a blue strip and the sun dipping low behind the goal at the west end of the pitch, the referee had a difficult job on his hands, though there was hardly a behavioural issue to handle.

HENRY BEAUFORT GOALSCORERS: (from left) Ben Moore, Dan Cutler, IK Hill.

The goal deflated Cams, who were coached by one-time Pompey player Billy Eames, who was at Fratton Park in the mid-Seventies and served under four separate managers – Jimmy Dickinson, Ron Tindall, Ian St John and John Mortimore – during his three years there.

When Ben Moore converted Dan Cutler's free kick, Henry Beaufort were almost home and dry.

Put through by George Welch, Cutler got the fourth goal himself.

Henry Beaufort: Callum Hossick, Robert Clements, Tom Knapton, Ben Donnell, Jack Statham, Dan Cutler, Toby Elloway, Nick Berry Green, George Welch, Nathan Spurgeon, Josh Lippett, Matt Laud, Ben Moore, IK Hill, Joe Elloway, David Hawes.

● Brockenhurst are eyeing further success in the AoC British Colleges Cup after beating the Bristol Academy of Sport 3-2 to reach the semi-finals.

Jack Hoey scored twice and Josh Rose got the other as Brockenhurst led 2-0 and then 3-1 before Bristol had a man sent ofF.

Brock's reward is a semi-final home tie against the East London Leadership College in the semi-finals.

Proud day for Pallas

HAMPTWORTH'S Henry Pallas has begun his path as a professional golfer.

But wherever he ends up, his final year as an amateur ended with a proud moment for his family when dad David presented him with the club championship trophy for a fourth and final time.

In winning the 2014 event, Pallas matched the record set by James Huffam.

Henry said: "To get the club championship trophy from my dad was great. It meant a lot to both me and him.

"I don't think I can pick one memory from playing at Hamptworth above any other because I've been there most of my life, but that was - and always will be - a very special night for both of us.

"I've always loved the atmosphere of club competitions as all sections get along so well at Hamptworth and everyone enjoys themselves."

Winning five successive club championships will be a tough task for anyone that follows the joint record holders.

Henry remembers all too well how close he came to missing out in 2013 when his friend Finlay Charles was leading by three after the first round.

Pallas did not catch him until the short 17th on the rolling course on the edge of the New Forest before finally sealing a one-shot win on the final hole.

Wiltshire has produced a number of England internationals over the last 10 years, including Jordan Smith and Ben Stow, the last two Brabazon Trophy winners in the English Amateur Strokeplay Championship.

Stow, from Salisbury, was a member at Hamptworth for 18 months as he began to make a reputation on the English amateur stage, completing the grand slam of the Wiltshire Junior, Colts and Amateur Championships two years running in 2008 and 2009.

Henry, who went to Bishop Wordsworth's School and grew up in Redlynch, is keen to play at the highest level on the PGA regional circuit.

The 20-year-old has already won one of the Wiltshire and Dorset PGA Winter Series, finishing second in two more, with the chance to have a crack at the PGA West Region Order of Merit events, which carry exemptions into the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth and other European Challenge Tour events.

But for now his main priority is settling into his new role as an assistant to Hamptworth head pro Nick Stoner, who has been at the club for seven years after succeeding former European Tour player Andy Beal.

Henry added: "I am running the junior coaching sessions on Saturdays and helping with teaching the ladies with a regular roll-up session every Wednesday.

"I'd like to thank Nick for all his support not only as a coach but as an employer which continues now and into the future."

The annual presentation night marked a successful season for Hamptworth as the Lynne Angle and Jan Cox won the Hart Cup at the Wiltshire Ladies Country Foursomes when the club staged the event.

The men won the Wendell League and claimed the Ryder Cup in their biennial clash with neighbours Wellow last October.

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A.J Miller Trophy, semi-finals: AFC Bursledon v Yacht Tavern, Hamble Roll Call v KRL.
Charlie Godden Trophy, third round: Portside v Marchwood Rangers.
Senior Division: Bush Hill & Newton Heath 1977 v Cricketers Arms Fair Oak, Sholing United v AFC West End.
Junior Division 1: Chamberlayne Athletic v Landguard Rovers, Chartwell Green v AFC Portswood, Glen v Titans, Ice House v AFC Riverside, Sky Blues v RS Ocean Village.
Junior Division 2: Athletico Tin Hut v Lokomotiv Eastleigh, Boyatt Wood Wanderers v S & D, itchen Saints v Phoenix AFC, LG Galaxy v Testlands.
Junior Division 3: AFC Velmore v Hedge End Athletic, Bishops v Test Valley Spartans, Fleming Sports v Young Boys 93/4.
Junior Division 4: AFC Southbrook v Durley, King George v Holbury United, Otter v Shelfside, Royale Marine v Eastpoint.
Junior Division 5: Bitterne Ducks v Itchen Albion, Burridge AFC v Sholing Monks, Curbridge v Southampton Seahawks, St Minion s v Dorchester Arms.
Junior Division 6: Hunters Inn v Mottisfont, JSC v AFC Spitfire, Netley Royals v AFC Phoenix, Sporting Compass v Fawley RBL, Unity v Bannister Park.
Junior Division 7: AFC Bishopstoke Res v AFC Carnival, Chamberlayne Athletic Res v Dorchester Manor, Lyndhurst JFC v Portswood United Res, Testwood Tornadoes v AFC Waterside.

WINCHESTER & DISTRICT LEAGUE
Gerald Ballard Shield, quarter-finals: Owslebury v AFC Gecko, FILO v Mucky Duck, Winchester County v South Sonston Swifts, Worthys v Whitenap.
Premier Division: FC Exchange v Halfway United.
Division 1: AFC Allbrook v Hedge End Hawks, AFC Stoneham v AFC Corinthians.
Division 2: Ropley Res v King Alfred, FILO Res v Worthies S&S Club.

GOSPORT, FAREHAM & SOLENT LEAGUE
Hampshire Intermediate Cup, semi-final: CJ Glass v West Farnborough.
Hampshire Junior A Cup, semi-final: Village Home v Lee CC.
PDFA Junior B Cup, semi-final: TML v Bridgemary Colts.
PDFA Junior C Cup, semi-final: Elson Titans v Queens head Raiders.
Gosport Borough Supporters Cup, quarter-finals: Hoeford United v AFC Gosport, Eat Lodge v Bridgemary Eagles, Stubbington v Heathfield Royals.
Fareham Town Supporters Cup, quarter-final: Whiteley XI v AFC Onecom.
Division 1: CMS v Green Dragon, Solent Town v Crofton Saints.
Division 2: Whiteley v Go Bowling, Parkway Athletic v Queens Head United.
Division 3: AFC Seaway v Dryden, Jolly Roger v AFC Alverstoke, Castle in the Air v Gosport Wanderers, Fighting Cocks v Stubbington.
Division 4: Village Home Res v AFC Whiteley, AFC Gosdport Town v Duke of Connaught's, Foresters United v Daedalus.
Division 5: AFC Whiteley Res v Borough Town, AFC Dynamo v Testcombe Town, Gipsy Queen v White Hart, RVT v Wispers, New Inn v Wallington Athletic.

SOUTHAMPTON YOUTH LEAGUE
U18s
Salvage Cup, quarter-finals: Bitterne v Romsey Yellow, Colden Common Rangers v Eastleigh Blue, Eastleigh White v Winsor Green, Raiders v Hedge End Rangers White.
Division 1: Hedge End Rangers Blue v AFC Stoneham.
Division 2: Hythe & Dibden v Alresford Town White, Warsash Wasps v Southside.
Division 3: Romsey Town Blue v Chamberlayne Athletic, S & D v Hamble United Red, Totton & Eling Black v Romsey Town Cougars.
U16s
Division 1: AFC Totton v Colden Common, Eastleigh White v Sholing, Fareham Town v Winchester Black, Romsey Town Cougars v Winchester City.
Division 2: AFC Stoneham v Croft Saints, Hedge End Rangers White v Brendon Bush Hill, Hythe & Dibden Jets v Warsash Wasps, Raiders v Wellow.
Division 3: Hamble United Red v Romsey Town Blue, Sky Blues v Chamberlayne Athletic, Folland v AFC Hiltingbury, S & D v Ice Sports, Sportstars v Alresford Town, Townhill Lingland v Hedge End Rangers Red, Wyvern Dragons v Sarisbury Sparks, Winsor United Red v Itchen Bulldogs.
Division 4: Baddesley Park v Winsor United, Marchwood Rangers v Botley Village, M & T v Netley Royals, QK Southampton Jets v Bitterne, Romsey Town Panthers v Hythe & Dibden Hawks, St Francis Rovers v AFC Weston.

TYRO SOUTHAMPTON LEAGUE
U11s
Division 1 East: Botley Village Lions v City Central, Sholing White v Bitterne Black, Soccer4all Tigers v Colden Common Rovers.
Division 2 East: Eastleigh White v H E Youth, Sarisbury Sparks v Alresford Town, Warsash Wasps Black v Winchester Blue, Wyvern Dragons v Colden Common Rangers.
Division 3 East: hedge End Rangers White v Wyvern Sharks, St Francis Knights v Botley Village Tigers, ST Francis Rangers v Warsash Wasps White, Townhill lingland v Hedge End Rangers Red.
Division 1 West: AFC Hiltingbuyry Hurricanes v Southbrook Rangers, Oakwood Lions v Oakwood Dynamos, Oakwood Ravens v Romsey Cougars, Pace Cougars v Marchwood Rangers.

CONTINUED ON FACING PAGE

Photographs from the action in the Under-11s

Southampton score against Gosport. Order no 33812817

Gosport celebrate a goal. Order no 33812132

The Southampton team talk. Order no 33810750

Katie Sherwood and James Elkins go for the ball. Order no 33810059

James Elkins for Southampton against Basingstoke. Order no 33809369

Harvey Hughes for Southampton. Order no 33453258

A goal for Southampton against Basingstoke. Order no 33452538

A goal for Aldershot. Order no 33438641

ORDER ECHO PICTURES ONLINE AT DAILYECHO.CO.UK

Football Festival, BTC Ground, Stoneham Lane

ABOVE: The Southampton team. Order no 34384279
RIGHT: The Fareham team Order no 34384256

A feast of football

The Hampshire Schools' FA's inaugural under-11 district festival at the BTC Ground, Stoneham Lane, was so successful the organisers are planning another tournament after Easter.

Teams from Aldershot, Basingstoke, Gosport & Fareham competed in a round-robin tournament, which will probably be repeated next month, with Eastleigh and Portsmouth also involved.

The Basingstoke team Order no 34384253

Brandon McKinnon for Gosport Order no 33439373

TAG RUGBY PICTURES - SEE PAGES 44-45

FIXTURES

FROM FACING PAGE
Division 2 West: Compton v Pace Pumas, Ice Sports v AFC Hiltingbury Harriers, QK Southampton v Baddesley Park Knights, Salisbury City v AFC Stoneham.
Division 3 West: AFC Hiltingbury Hawks v Winsor United Red, Romsey Panthers v Oakwood Rangers, Stoke Park Rangers v Winsor United Green, Wellow Wqasps v Lakewood leopards.
U12S
Division 1: Oakwood Terriers v AFC Hiltingbury Hawks, Winchester Black v Hythe & Dibden Neons.
Division 2: Deportivo Boca v Eastleigh , Oakwood Harriers v Colden Common Rovers.
Division 5: Botley Village v Wellow, Hedge End Blue v Littleton Leopards, Oakwood Saints v Fawley Falcons.
Division 6: AFC Stoneham v Stoke Park White, Hedge End White v Chamberlayne Pirates.
U13s
Division 1: Bitterne Black v Eastleigh White, Hedge End Blue v Eastleigh Blue, Winchester Black v Totton & Eling Red.
Division 2: Southbrook United v Colden Common Rangers, Sportstars v Hythe Strikers, Whiteley Wqanderers v Littleton Lions.
Division 3: Hamble United Red v Romsey Town, Sarisbury Sparks v Colden Common Royals, St Francis Rangers v Littleton Leopards, Weston Warriors v Hythe & Dibden Vikings.
Division 4: Sholing v AFC stoneham, Wyvern Dragons v Wellow.
U14s
Tommy Traynor Trophy, semi-final: Bitterne Black v Hythe & Dibden Phoenix.
Division 1: Colden Common Rovers v Botley Village, Eastleigh v Hedge End Blue.
Division 2: Hedge End Rangers White v QK Southampton, Ice Sports v Colden Common Rangers.
Division 3: Hamble Unit4d v Baddesley Park, St Francis Rovers v Oakwood Eagles.
Division 4: Alresford Town v Fawley Falcons, Hythe & Dibden Legends v Bitterne Red.
U15s
Division 1: BTC Southamton v Warsash Wasps, Eastleigh v QK Southampton, Sportstars v Pace Cougars, Winchester Black v Sholing.
Division 2: Baddesley park Crusaders v Oaklands Rangers, Hedge End Rangers Blue v Ccompton.
Division 3: Botley Village v Littleton Lions.
Division 4: Hythe Strikers v Hythe & Dibden Turbos.
Division 5: Hedge End Rangers White v Bitterne.
HAMPSHIRE WOMENS LEAGUE
Cup: Winchester City Flyers v Mudeford Phoenix Flames, Winchester City Flyers Res v Warsash Wasps, Horndean v AFC Bournemouth.
Division 1: Team Solent v Rushmoor Community, Widbrook United v Christchurch.
Division 2: Kingsclere v Bursledon.
Division 3: Alderbury v Sholing.
Under 18s: Portsmouth v Southampton Saints.

MONDAY
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Redditch v Hitchin.

TUESDAY
VANARAMA CONFERENCE
Premier: Aldershot v FC Halifax, Gateshead v Welling, Kidderminster v Eastleigh, Macclesfield v AFC Telford, Torquay v Chester, Wrexham v Southport.
South: Bishops Stortford v Staines, Maidenhead v Concord, Weston-super-Mare v Bath City.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Biggleswade v Poole Town, Histon v Bideford.
Division One South & West: Bridgwater v Merthyr Town, Cinderford v Taunton, Shortwood v Didcot.
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: Newport IoW v Winchester City, Andover Town v Bournemouth Poppies, Horndean v Fareham Town, Totton & Eling v Moneyfields.
SWL CUP
Semi-final: Petersfield Town v Bemerton HH (at Alresford Town FC).
Division One: Hythe & Dibden v Romsey Town.
NORTH HANTS INTERMEDIATE CUP FINAL Broughton v Overton Utd Res (7.30, at Whitchurch Utd FC).
ANDOVER OPEN CUP
Semi-final: Stockbridge v Otterbourne (7.30).
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division: Bemerton HH v AFC Totton, Dorchester Town v Wimborne Town.
Division One West: Verwood v Laverstock & Ford.
Division One East: Folland Sports v Newport IoW.

WEDNESDAY
HAMPSHIRE FA SENIOR CUP
Semi-final: Sholing v AFC Bournemouth.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Cambridge City v Burnham, Frome v Weymouth.
Red Insure Cup, semi-final: Corby v North Leigh.
PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE
PEHPL Combination Cup, semi-final: Hamble Club Res v Hedge End Rangers Res (at Locks Heath FC, 7.15)
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division: Moneyfields v Petersfield Town, Ringwood v AFC Portchester.
Division One West: Bashley v Romsey Town, Downton v Blackfield & Langley, Hythe & Dibden v Fawley AFC.

THURSDAY
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division: Winchester City v Sholing.

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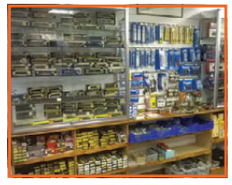

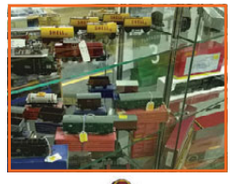

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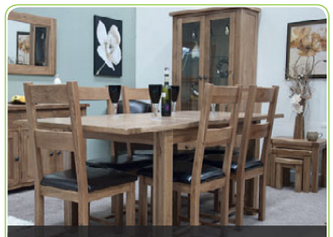
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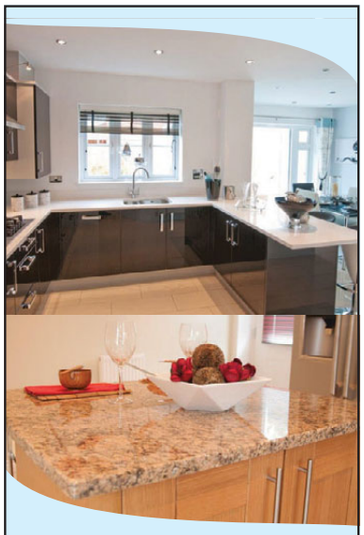

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BOOK of the WEEK

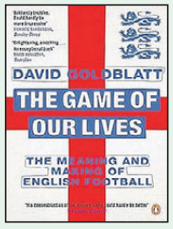
The Game of Our Lives
By David Goldblatt

Sportsbookofthemonth.com price: £ 16.59 saving £ 3.41 on rrp

There was a time when supporting a football team was not a universal pursuit; when the beautiful game failed to dominate virtually every discussion regarding national sport to the extent it does today.

Nowadays, public figures from politicians to royalty are keen to display their round ball allegiance and, in some cases rather disingenuously, speak of the time when they saw player X or Y while stood on ramshackle terraces, as though to prove their working class credentials.

In Game of Our Lives, David Goldblatt argues that this willingness to show support to a particular team and the astonishingly successful rise of the Premier League is a direct consequence of a shift in social attitudes rooted in Thatcherism.



Loyalty, however stretched, he maintains, is still prized, although "the dilettante, the arriviste and the mercenary are damned."

In other words, if you're a politician about to publicly declare your support, it's better to don the scarf of a Football League club rather than, say, Chelsea or Man City.

Goldblatt can be guilty of stating the obvious. Soap operas and football, he writes, "are significant components of Britain's popular culture, but they are sharply separated by gender," an observation unlikely to shock the reader.

Yet he makes a persuasive case when highlighting the extent to which football has permeated our culture. Reference to it is evident in stage drama, TV plays and cinema, while the game has woven itself into daily language, often in the unlikeliest settings – he quotes writers who refer to 'premier league' novelists and scientists, primarily because we understand the simple yardstick by which they're compared.

Like many before him, Goldblatt is unhappy with the gradual takeover of English football by a mixture of chancers, gangsters and venture capitalists, a process he likens to selling the crown jewels.

Private ownership, he believes, "trumps public provision and social needs", even though football clubs have been privately owned since the mid-nineteenth century. But he wonders about governance – who has been in charge and allowed this to happen?

It's a reasonable question – one of many emanating from a fascinating book which successfully combines sport and social history to highlight football's inexorable rise.

Quiz question:

We've teamed up with Sports Book of the Month & have a copy of Game of Our Lives to give away.

To win this week's sports book, go to their website (www.sportsbookofthemonth.com) and answer the following question:

Who were the last club to be crowned English league champions before the Premier League was established?

Photographs from the tag rugby competition at

WEEKE SCHOOL Order no: 34370940

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CLIVE DOWNTON'S RUGBY ROUND-UP – EVERY TUESDAY IN THE ECHO

Winchester Rugby Club earlier this week

ST BEDE'S SCHOOL Order no: 34366936

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GOT A RUGBY STORY? CONTACT US AT ECHOSPORT@DAILYECHO.CO.UK

Sports Quiz

1. Bradford beat two Barclays Premier League clubs on their way to reaching the FA Cup quarter-finals. Name them.

2. Which major golf title did Charl Schwartzel win in 2011?

3. Which city's NBA franchise is known as the Celtics?

4. With which winter sport would you associate David Murdoch, Greg Drummond and Michael Goodfellow?

5. How many goals have Liverpool scored across their five victorious European Cup/Champions League final appearances? a) Eight b) Nine or c) 10.

6. With which club did Paul Lambert (right) win the Champions League as a player?

7. Lancashire have signed which Australian as their overseas player for 2015?

8. Which rugby club play their home games at the Stade Jean-Bouin?

9. How many European Championships gold medals has Mo Farah won? a) Five b) Six or c) Seven.

10. Who won the women's singles title at Wimbledon in 1977?

11 Who was the last non-Englishman to win the world snooker championship?

12 From which club did Chelsea sign Kurt Zouma last year?

13 Kingsholm Stadium is home to which Aviva Premiership club?

14 Padraig Harrington has won how many major golf titles?

15 What is the nickname of New Orleans' NBA team?

16. Tottenham winger Erik Lamela (above) started his professional career at which club?

17. Which Super League side plays their home games at Headingley?

18. Which snooker player is also know as The Milkman?

19. In what year did France last win the Six Nations grand slam?

20. Which three English counties has Kevin Pietersen represented?

Answers: 1. Chelsea and Sunderland; 2. The Masters; 3. Boston; 4. Curling; 5. b) Nine; 6. Borussia Dortmund; 7. Peter Siddle; 8. Stade Francais; 9. a) Five; 10. Virginia Wade; 11. John Higgins (2011); 12. St Etienne; 13. Gloucester; 14. Three; 15. The Pelicans; 16. River Plate; 17. Leeds; 18. Robert Milkins; 19. 2010; 20. Nottinghamshire, Hampshire and Surrey.

FA Cup Sixth Round

A. Villa ..... **L** — **W.B.A.** ..... **L**
HT L-L

Bradford ..... **0** — **Reading** **0**
HT 0-0

Barclays Premier League

Q.P.R. ..... **1** — **Tottenham Hotspur** ... **2**
Sandro 75 — Kane 34,68
HT 0-1 — Att 17,992

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Chelsea	27	11	2	0	27	5	8	4	2	30	17	63
Man City	28	9	3	2	28	12	8	4	2	31	15	58
Arsenal	28	9	3	1	30	11	7	3	5	23	19	54
Man Utd	28	11	1	2	30	10	4	7	3	17	16	53
Liverpool	28	8	5	2	24	14	7	1	5	18	16	51
Tottenham	28	8	3	4	25	19	7	2	4	21	20	50
SAINTS	**28**	**8**	**3**	**4**	**25**	**10**	**7**	**1**	**5**	**14**	**10**	**49**
Stoke	28	7	2	5	19	17	5	4	5	14	17	42
Swansea	28	7	4	3	19	15	4	3	7	14	22	40
West Ham	28	7	3	5	21	15	3	6	4	18	19	39
Newcastle	28	6	4	4	19	18	3	4	7	13	25	35
Crystal P	28	3	3	7	14	19	4	6	5	17	20	30
W.B.A.	28	5	3	6	17	19	2	6	6	9	17	30
Everton	28	3	7	3	19	18	3	3	9	14	23	28
Hull	28	4	4	6	15	17	2	5	7	11	20	27
Sunderlnd	28	2	7	5	12	18	2	7	5	11	21	26
A. Villa	28	3	5	6	11	18	3	2	9	4	20	25
Q.P.R.	28	5	4	6	20	20	1	0	12	9	29	22
Burnley	28	3	5	6	13	19	1	5	8	12	28	22
Leicester	27	2	4	6	13	17	2	2	11	11	27	18

SkyBet Championship

Blackpool ..... **0** — **Sheff Wed** **1**
McGugan 54
HT 0-0 — Att 11,887

Cardiff ..... **1** — **Charlton** **2**
Macheda 56 — Watt 74
Buyens 87 pen
HT 0-0 — Att 20,488

Derby Cty ..... **2** — **Birminghm** **2**
Ward 20 — Caddis 90 pen
Ince 48 — Donaldson 90
HT 1-0 — Att 31,522

Huddersfld ..... **0** — **Rotherham** **2**
Arnason 44
Sammon 60
HT 0-1 — Att 13,342

Ipswich ..... **1** — **Brentford** **1**
Murphy 9 — Douglas 25
HT 1-1 — Att 20,132

Millwall ..... **1** — **Norwich** **4**
Gregory 82 pen — Howson 38,60
Hooper 45 pen
Hoolahan 57
HT 0-2 — Att 11,116

Nottm For ..... **2** — **Middlesbro** **1**
Gardner 34 — Leadbitter 27
Blackstock 65
HT 1-1 — Att 24,200

Wigan ..... **0** — **Leeds Utd** **1**
Mowatt 51
HT 0-0 — Att 16,163

Wolves ..... **2** — **Watford** **2**
Afobe 14 — Vydra 30
Price 51 — Deeney 65
HT 1-1 — Att 23,146

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
CHERRIES	**36**	**9**	**6**	**3**	**32**	**21**	**10**	**3**	**5**	**42**	**18**	**66**
Derby Cty	36	11	5	2	41	17	8	4	6	27	22	66
Watford	36	11	3	4	40	19	9	3	6	32	25	66
Middlesbro	36	11	4	3	33	10	8	5	5	21	16	66
Norwich	36	9	5	4	40	19	10	3	5	30	20	65
Brentford	36	11	3	4	36	20	8	2	8	22	26	62
Ipswich	36	11	4	3	30	13	6	6	6	26	26	61
Wolves	36	9	5	4	28	17	7	5	6	22	27	58
Nottm For	36	8	5	5	32	24	6	6	6	27	27	53
Sheff Wed	36	4	8	6	11	15	8	5	5	21	19	49
Blackburn	35	8	5	4	26	19	4	7	7	19	26	48
Charlton	36	7	8	3	25	17	4	7	7	16	28	48
Leeds Utd	36	8	4	6	21	17	5	4	9	18	29	47
Birminghm	36	7	5	6	21	26	4	8	6	21	26	46
Cardiff	36	8	3	7	25	24	3	8	7	18	24	44
Huddersfld	36	7	5	6	24	23	4	4	10	21	39	42
Bolton	35	8	6	4	30	22	3	2	12	13	32	41
Reading	35	7	3	7	21	19	4	5	9	16	34	41
Brighton	35	6	6	6	25	23	3	7	7	15	20	40
Rotherham	36	6	6	6	24	27	3	7	8	13	26	40
Fulham	36	8	3	7	28	25	3	3	12	19	39	39
Wigan	36	2	7	9	15	22	5	3	10	17	26	31
Millwall	36	3	5	10	18	34	4	5	9	13	26	31
Blackpool	36	4	4	10	16	29	0	6	12	13	41	22

SkyBet League One

Barnsley ..... **3** — **Walsall** **0**
Waring 15,71
Winnall 89
HT 1-0 — Att 9,275

Coventry ..... **2** — **Port Vale** **3**
O'Brien 4 — Pope 40
Odelusi 70 — Marshall 45
O'Connor 76
HT 1-2 — Att 9,446

Crawley ..... **1** — **Bristol C** **2**
Wordsworth 60 — Flint 48
Ayling 84
HT 0-0 — Att 3,333

Crewe ..... **2** — **Scunthorpe** **0**
Leigh 54
Haber 55
HT 0-0 — Att 4,213

Gillingham ..... **1** — **Doncaster** **1**
Marquis 44 — Forrester 40
HT 1-1 — Att 5,909

M K Dons ..... **0** — **Preston** **2**
Robinson 66
Garner 70
HT 0-0 — Att 10,618

Peterboro ..... **1** — **Leyton O** **0**
Taylor 25
HT 1-0 — Att 6,525

Rochdale ..... **2** — **Colchester** **1**
Bennett 6 — Porter 63 pen
Henderson 55
HT 1-0 — Att 2,625

Sheff Utd ..... **1** — **Fleetwood Town** **2**
Done 39 — Morris 25
Haughton 35
HT 1-2 — Att 18,668

Swindon ..... **3** — **Notts Cnty** **0**
Swift 58
Williams 64 pen
Toffolo 89
HT 0-0 — Att 8,013

Yeovil ..... **2** — **Oldham** **1**
Grant 55 — Winchester 44
Hayter 90
HT 0-1 — Att 3,917

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Bristol C	35	13	2	2	32	13	10	5	3	35	19	76
Preston	34	9	7	1	29	17	10	2	5	26	13	66
Swindon	35	11	3	4	32	19	8	4	5	30	19	64
M K Dons	35	11	3	4	40	16	7	5	5	28	21	62
Sheff Utd	34	7	5	5	24	18	8	3	6	24	23	53
Doncaster	35	6	4	7	17	19	7	7	4	27	24	50
Barnsley	35	10	2	6	33	24	5	3	9	14	24	50
Peterboro	35	8	3	7	21	21	7	2	8	22	23	50
Chesterfld	34	8	4	5	29	21	5	5	7	20	24	48
Bradford	33	6	5	6	21	21	7	4	5	21	17	48
Port Vale	35	8	3	6	25	21	6	3	9	20	27	48
Fleetwood	35	6	8	3	20	18	7	1	10	16	21	48
Rochdale	33	7	3	7	25	20	7	2	7	33	24	47
Gillingham	35	8	5	5	30	25	4	5	8	20	26	46
Oldham	34	7	4	5	23	24	5	6	7	20	26	46
Walsall	35	5	5	7	18	22	6	6	6	16	17	44
Scunthorpe	34	6	3	8	18	23	5	6	6	28	29	42
Crewe	35	8	4	6	19	24	4	2	11	15	35	42
Notts Cnty	34	4	2	10	16	23	7	6	5	18	20	41
Coventry	34	5	7	5	20	24	3	5	9	16	24	36
Leyton O	34	3	3	11	20	28	6	5	6	24	24	35
Colchester	35	4	2	11	19	29	5	5	8	21	29	34
Crawley	35	6	6	6	23	29	2	4	11	13	31	34
Yeovil	35	4	6	8	12	24	4	3	10	16	26	33

SkyBet League Two

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Burton Alb	35	12	2	3	23	9	8	5	5	24	21	67
Shrewsbry	35	13	4	1	34	9	6	4	7	16	17	65
Wycombe	35	7	6	4	21	17	10	7	1	30	15	64
Southend	35	8	7	3	19	9	8	4	5	21	23	59
Luton	35	11	4	3	28	12	5	6	6	15	19	58
Bury	35	11	3	4	27	16	6	4	7	19	20	58
Plymouth	35	11	3	4	27	9	5	4	8	15	17	55
Stevenage	35	12	2	4	31	19	4	5	8	20	25	55
Newport C	35	8	5	4	24	16	7	3	8	17	25	53
Northmptn	35	10	2	5	32	20	5	3	10	22	25	50
Wimbledon	35	9	4	5	30	22	4	6	7	15	22	49
Morecambe	35	6	5	6	17	18	7	4	7	21	19	48
Exeter	35	5	6	6	22	24	7	5	6	24	25	47
POMPEY	**35**	**9**	**4**	**4**	**27**	**16**	**2**	**8**	**8**	**13**	**23**	**45**
Acc Stanley	35	8	4	6	24	24	5	1	11	19	32	44
Dagenham	35	6	2	9	19	22	6	5	7	23	26	43
Cambridge	35	6	3	8	25	22	5	6	7	24	26	42
Oxford Utd	35	5	6	6	22	20	5	6	7	16	21	42
Mansfield	35	8	5	4	19	15	3	4	11	11	28	42
York	35	2	9	6	12	17	5	6	7	23	25	36
Carlisle	35	7	2	9	26	31	4	1	12	16	30	36
Cheltnham	35	4	8	6	18	22	4	3	10	13	28	35
Tranmere	35	5	6	7	24	24	3	4	10	13	24	34
Hartlepool	35	5	4	9	16	26	2	2	13	9	31	27

AFC Wimbledon **2** — **York** **1**
Oshilaja 19 — Hyde 43
Smith 90
HT 1-1 — Att 4,086

Acc Stanley ..... **1** — **POMPEY** **1**
Windass 16 — Taylor 20
HT 1-1 — Att 1,994

Bury ..... **0** — **Oxford Utd** **1**
O'Dowda 85
HT 0-0 — Att 3,645

Carlisle ..... **1** — **Exeter** **3**
Rigg 39 — Harley 30,56
Sercombe 90
HT 1-1 — Att 3,724

Cheltnham ..... **1** — **Mansfield** **1**
Burns 47 — Kee 68
HT 0-0 — Att 2,597

Hartlepool ..... **0** — **Burton Albion** **1**
F Cuvelier 90
HT 0-0 — Att 3,289

CUP CLASH: Reading's Jamie Mackie and Bradford City's James Meredith (left) in action during the FA Cup Sixth Round match at Valley Parade earlier today

Luton ..... **2** — **Morecambe** **3**
McGeehan 43 — Redshaw 18, Wilson 29
Lawless 76 — Wilkinson 86 og
HT 1-2 — Att 8,667

Plymouth ..... **2** — **Northmptn** **0**
O'Connor 28
Alessandra 86
HT 1-0 — Att 6,501

Shrewsbry ..... **1** — **Cambridge** **1**
Grant 16 — KaiKai 90
HT 1-0 — Att 5,075

Southend ..... **2** — **Wycombe** **2**
Corr 14,60 — Craig 28
Mawson 85
HT 1-1 — Att 6,204

Stevenage ..... **2** — **Newport County** **1**
Lee 31 — Chapman 88
Dembele 67
HT 1-0 — Att 2,941

Tranmere ..... **2** — **Dagenham** **3**
Gardner 43 — Cureton 40
Power 87 — Hemmings 50
Bingham 54
HT 1-1 — Att 4,762

Scottish Cup Sixth Round

Inverness CT ..... **P** — **Raith** ..... **P**
Postponed - due to waterlogged pitch.

Scottish Premiership

Motherwell ..... **1** — **Kilmarnock** **1**
McDonald 45 — Obadeyi 20
HT 1-1 — Att 4,192

Ross Cnty ..... **1** — **Partick** **0**
Curran 33
HT 1-0 — Att 3,358

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Celtic	27	10	2	2	31	7	10	1	2	25	7	63
Aberdeen	27	9	2	2	28	12	9	1	4	19	13	57
Inverness CT	28	8	4	2	21	14	8	1	5	21	15	53
Dundee Utd	27	9	2	3	26	15	5	2	6	23	23	46
Hamilton	29	6	3	5	23	16	6	2	7	16	24	41
St Johnstn	28	6	2	6	14	15	6	3	5	11	12	41
Dundee	28	4	6	4	19	19	6	3	5	20	20	39
Kilmarnock	28	6	1	6	17	18	3	7	5	13	18	35
Partick	28	4	4	6	22	18	3	3	8	13	18	28
Ross Cnty	28	4	0	10	14	25	2	6	6	15	27	24
Motherwell	28	4	3	7	10	19	2	1	11	11	33	22
St Mirren	28	1	2	12	8	23	5	1	7	14	23	21

Scottish Championship

Cowdenbth ..... **0** — **Rangers** **0**
HT 0-0 — Att 3,344

Dumbarton ..... **1** — **Alloa** **0**
Fleming 42 pen
HT 1-0 — Att 791

Scottish League One

Brechin ..... **0** — **Airdrieonians** **0**
HT 0-0 — Att 603

Dunfrmline ..... **2** — **Ayr Utd** **1**
Devlin 63 og — Crawford 86
Geggan 76
HT 0-0 — Att 2,467

Morton ..... **0** — **Forfar** **2**
Dale 25
Malin 78
HT 0-1 — Att 1,560

Stenhsmuir ..... **2** — **Peterhead** **1**
McMenamin 6 — Redman 41
Watt 56
HT 1-1 — Att 436

Stirling A ..... **P** — **Stranraer** ..... **P**
Postponed - due to waterlogged pitch.

Scottish League Two

Annan Athletic .. **1** — **Albion R** **3**
Clyde ..... **1** — **E Stirling** **1**
Montrose ..... **3** — **Arbroath** **0**
Queen Park ..... **1** — **East Fife** **0**

Vanarama Conference

Alfreton Town .... **2** — **Kiddrmnstr** **0**
Barnet ..... **1** — **Forest Grn** **3**
Braintree Town .. **1** — **Gateshead** **0**
Bristol R ..... **1** — **EASTLEIGH** **2**
Dover ..... **1** — **Lincoln City** **2**
FC Halifax ..... **0** — **Dartford** **0**
Macclesfld ..... **0** — **Aldershot** **0**
Southport ..... **0** — **Nuneaton** **0**
Torquay ..... **0** — **AFC Telford** **1**
Woking ..... **1** — **Grimsby** **2**
Wrexham ..... **1** — **Chester FC** **0**

Grey panels indicate High-scoring games

Local non-league results

VANARAMA FOOTBALL CONFERENCE
Premier:
Alfreton 2 Kidderminster Harriers 0
Barnet 1 Forest Green Rovers 3
Braintree 1 Gateshead 0
Bristol Rovers 1 Eastleigh 2
Dover Athletic 1 Lincoln City 2
FC Halifax Town 0 Dartford 0
Macclesfield 0 Aldershot 0
Southport 0 Nuneaton 0
Torquay Utd 0 AFC Telford Utd 1
Woking 1 Grimsby 2
Wrexham 1 Chester 0
South:
Bromley 1 Ebbsfleet Utd 2
Chelmsford City 1 Basingstoke Town 1
Concord Rangers 3 St Albans City 1
Eastbourne Borough 1 Gosport Borough 0
Farnborough 1 Staines Town 1
Hemel Hempstead 0 Bath City 3
Maidenhead Utd 0 Boreham Wood 1
Sutton Utd 0 Hayes & Yeading 1
Wealdstone 1 Bishops Stortford 4
Weston-super-Mare 2 Havant & Waterlooville 1
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division:
Banbury 2 Chippenham 4
Bideford 1 Redditch 1
Corby 3 Burnham 1
Frome 1 Hungerford 0
Histon 1 Arlesey 0
Hitchin 0 Dorchester 0
Paulton Rovers 1 Chesham 1
Slough 0 Cambridge City 4
St Neots 4 Cirencester 0
Truro 2 Biggleswade 1
Weymouth 2 Dunstable 2
Division One South & West:
AFC Totton 1 Merthyr Town 5
Bashley 0 Clevedon 0
Bridgwater 0 Stratford 0
Cinderford 1 Bishops Cleeve 0
Evesham 2 Fleet Town 0
Larkhall 2 Swindon Supermarine 1
Mangotsfield 1 Sholing 1
North Leigh 2 Taunton 0
Shortwood 0 Wimborne 1
Tiverton 1 Yate 1
Wantage 1 Didcot 3
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division:
AFC Portchester 2 Newport IoW 0
Alresford 3 Totton & Eling 1
Andover Town 2 Hamworthy Utd 0
Bemerton HH 3 Brockenhurst 1
Bournemouth Poppies 0 Blackfield & Langley 3
Fareham 0 Lymington Town 2
Fawley AFC 0 Petersfield 0
Horndean 3 Christchurch 0
Moneyfields 5 Whitchurch 2
Winchester City 2 Verwood 0
Division One:
Cowes Sports 2 Amesbury 1
Downton 2 Team Solent 3
East Cowes Vics 1 Romsey 3
Fleet Spurs 2 Hythe & Dibden 1
Laverstock & Ford 2 Pewsey Vale 2
Ringwood 1 Tadley Calleva 4
US Portsmouth 4 New Milton 1
HAMPSHIRE INTERMEDIATE CUP
Semi-finals:
Baffins Milton Rovers 4 West Wight 1
Hamble Club 6 Cadnam Utd 1
PUMA ENGINEERING HANTS PREMIER LEAGUE
PEHPL Combination Cup, semi-final:
Liphook Utd Res 3 Overton Utd Res 0
Premier Division:
AFC Stoneham 1 Winchester Castle 1
Clanfield 1 Headley Utd 2
Fleetlands 1 Stockbridge 2
Hedge End Rangers 0 Paulsgrove 0
Liphook Utd 2 Otterbourne 3
Locks Heath 1 Bush Hill 3
Overton Utd 3 Liss Athletic 4
QK Southampton 3 Colden Common 1
Division One:
Andover Lions 1 Infinity 2
Broughton 4 AFC Petersfield 0
Four Marks 0 Lyndhurst 1
Michelmersh &Timsbury 0 Upham 1
Netley Central Sports 2 Hayling Utd 0
Combination:
Headley Utd 0 Hedge End Rangers 5
Liss Athletic 1 AFC Stoneham 4
Otterbourne 3 Hamble Club 3
Paulsgrove 2 Fleetlands 1
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division:
Sholing 0 Moneyfields 0
Team Solent 4 AFC Totton 0
Wimborne Town 2 AFC Portchester 5
Division 1 West:
Hythe & Dibden 4 Lymington Town 0
Romsey Town 0 Bashley 4
Verwood Town 6 East Cowes Vics 0
Division 1 East:
Alton Town 3 Folland Sports 4
Newport IoW pp Horndean
Tadley Calleva 1 US Portsmouth 3
DREW SMITH SOUTHAMPTON LEAGUE
Hampshire Junior A Cup, semi-final:
East Boldre 2 Ryde Saints 2 (Ryde won 4-5 on pens)
Southampton Supplementary Cup, quarter-finals:
AFC Gulf Western 4 Durley Res 2
New Forest 4 Woodlands 1
Nursling 4 Hythe Aztec Vets 1
Southampton Supplementary Cup (RND of 16):
BTC Soton Vets A 1 Hythe Aztec Jun 5
Premier:
Durley 1 Bishopstoke 1
Solent Saints 2 Burridge AFC 1
Soton University 1 BTC Soton 1
Senior 1:
BTC Soton Res 2 Braishfield 2
Langley Manor 2 Bishops Waltham Dyn 2

POOLS	CHECK	
1	1	2
1	2	1
1	3	1
1	4	● 3
1	5	2
1	6	1
2	7	2
1	8	1
1	9	2
1	10	2
● 3	11	● 3
1	12	1
1	13	1
1	14	2
1	15	1
1	16	● 3
● 3	17	● 3
1	18	2
1	19	● 3
● 3	20	2
1	21	2
1	22	1
1	23	1
● 3	24	1
● 3	25	● 3
1	26	1
1	27	● 3
1	28	1
1	29	● 3
1	30	2
1	31	1
1	32	1
2	33	2
2	34	2
2	35	2
1	36	1
L	37	L
1	38	1
1	39	1
1	40	1
1	41	2
1	42	1
1	43	● 3
1	44	1
● 3	45	● 3
1	46	1
1	47	1
L	48	L
L	49	L

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